

Lewis Headache Center

Ketamine Infusion

Patient Information



Is ketamine right for me?

Your provider discussed this treatment because you have chronic migraine or new daily persistent headache. You have also tried many medications and headache treatments. Most patients have tried several oral medications. You may have also tried Botox or nerve blocks. The goal of this treatment is to decrease your headache pain.

Will my headache go away?

On average patients see a decrease in their headache pain. A study in the Headache Journal in 2016 showed the average pain in patients was about 7 out of 10 before the treatment. When they went home, their pain was a 3.8 out of 10. 71.4% of patients had relief.

Will my headache stay away?

We hope your pain will stop. Your provider may need to use other headache medications or treatments to stop them from coming back. These may be treatments you have tried before. If some of the medications or treatments did not work before, your provider may want to try these again, as they may work now. Based on research, 27% of the patients had long term relief.

What should I expect?

We will call the hospital before your stay. Once your room is ready, they will call you. You will go to the Admissions area. Admission desk is at the front of the hospital. A doctor will see you and order the treatment. This process can take time. The dose will start low and slowly increased. As the dose gets higher, you may become confused. If you have severe dizziness, upset stomach, slowed breathing or other negative reactions, we will stop the treatment. Tell your provider and nurse if you experience these symptoms. Your provider can give you medications to help decrease these side effects. You will be in the hospital for 4-7 days. If your pain improves quickly, you may go home sooner.

What are the side effects?

There can be side effects with this treatment. The most common are vision changes, confusion, hallucinations, slurred speech, dizziness, vivid dreams, tiredness, unsteady walking, upset stomach, emotional changes, difficulty urinating, and difficulty sleeping. There may be options to reduce these. Talk about your concerns with your provider. These will stop within a few days of ending the treatment.

How does it work?

Ketamine is an infusion to treat pain. It works by stopping a receptor that signals for pain. These signals can lead to headaches. When the receptor becomes blocked, fewer signals are sent. This is what leads to decreased pain.

What can I bring to the hospital?

We want your stay to be as comfortable as possible. We recommend bringing a toothbrush, toothpaste, a pillow, eye mask, comfortable loose-fitting clothing, and ear plugs. If you have a shirt that buttons down in the front, this is preferred. Overall, it is our goal that you are as relaxed as possible throughout this process. Meditation applications on your mobile device can be useful to help remain stress free.