ABOUT YOUR MEDICINE

Esketamine

Spravato, a fast-acting antidepressant given as a nasal spray

Esketamine is a nasal spray for depression that has not responded to other medicines, and it can start helping within days.

WHAT IT TREATS	HOW YOU TAKE IT	WHEN IT WORKS	HABIT FORMING
Hard-to-treat depression	Nasal spray, in a clinic	Hours to days; 2-4 wks full	Can be misused

⚠ IMPORTANT SAFETY WARNING

This spray can make you very sleepy or detached, and it can slow your breathing, so you stay in the clinic about **2 hours**. It can be misused, and in people under **25** it can raise thoughts of suicide. Call or text **988** if those start.

WHAT THIS MEDICINE DOES

- **Esketamine** acts on glutamate, a brain messenger other antidepressants leave alone, which is why it can work quickly.
- It is added on top of a daily antidepressant pill rather than replacing it. The two are meant to work together.
- It is given only in a **certified clinic**. You spray it yourself, but trained staff stay with you the whole time.
- It is usually offered when at least two other antidepressants have not helped enough on their own.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Feeling floaty, dreamy, or oddly detached during treatment is expected, and it usually fades within **2 hours**.
- Some people feel lighter within hours or days. For others the change builds over the first **2 to 4 weeks**.
- Sessions usually start twice a week and then spread out as you improve, on a schedule you set with your prescriber.
- Your blood pressure often rises for an hour or so after a dose. That is why staff keep checking it while you rest.

HOW TO TAKE IT

- You use the spray yourself at the clinic while staff coach you through each step. It never goes home with you.
- Do not eat for **2 hours** and do not drink for **30 minutes** before your appointment, to cut down on nausea.
- If you use an allergy nasal spray, use it at least **1 hour** beforehand and tell the clinic that you did.
- Plan to stay about **2 hours** afterward while staff check your blood pressure and see how you are doing.
- Arrange your ride home before you arrive, because you will not be allowed to drive away from the clinic.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Feeling detached or unreal: settle back, breathe slowly, and tell staff. It passes on its own before you leave.
- Dizziness or a spinning feeling: stay seated or lying down, and let a staff member steady you the first time you stand.
- Nausea: the no-food window before your dose helps most, and the clinic can give you something for it if you need it.
- A numb or bitter taste in your nose and mouth: harmless, and it clears once you can drink water again.
- Headache after a session: usually mild, and water plus a quiet hour handles it for most people.
- Feeling drained the rest of the day: plan a light afternoon and hand off driving, errands, and big decisions.

⚠ CALL YOUR PRESCRIBER OR GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF

- Trouble breathing, or lips or fingertips turning blue, is a **911** emergency and cannot wait.
- New or worse thoughts of suicide between visits: call or text **988** now and tell your clinic.
- A pounding headache, chest pain, or blurred vision after a dose means tell staff at once or call **911**.
- A detached or confused feeling that is still there the next day needs a call to your prescriber.

WHAT TO AVOID

- Do not drive or use machinery until the next day, after a full night of sleep. This is a firm rule, not advice.
- Skip alcohol on treatment days. It adds to the sleepiness and can slow your breathing even further.
- Tell your team about every sedating medicine you take, including sleep aids, opioids, and anxiety medicines.
- Never take this medicine outside a certified clinic. Without monitoring it is genuinely unsafe.
- If you are pregnant, nursing, or hoping to be, tell your prescriber before your next scheduled session.

STOPPING IT SAFELY

- Do not simply stop attending. Depression can return, sometimes quickly, when treatment ends without a plan.
- Your prescriber will space sessions further apart over time rather than ending them all at once.
- Keep taking your daily antidepressant pill through the whole course unless your prescriber tells you otherwise.
- If getting to sessions is the hard part, say so. Schedules and rides can often be worked out together.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How many sessions before we decide whether this is working?
- Who will drive me home after each of these appointments?
- Which of my other medicines make the sleepiness worse?
- What should I do if I still feel off once I get home?

Where this information comes from

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NOTE

Sources are listed in APA 7th edition style. This handout is general information about a medicine, not medical advice, and it does not replace the instructions from your own prescriber or pharmacist. Never start, change, or stop a medicine on your own. If you think you are having a serious reaction, call your prescriber; if you cannot breathe, cannot stay awake, or are thinking of harming yourself, call 911 or 988 right away.