

Ketamine

Access to safe, effective treatment is an important part of your recovery. Our approach to requests for esketamine/ketamine reflects medical evidence regarding safety and effectiveness, WCB–Alberta (WCB) policies and procedures, and regulatory requirements. Both esketamine and ketamine are designated as Schedule 1 substances in Canada with a high potential for harm and abuse, and are Type 1 monitored drugs in Alberta.

Approved use

Esketamine (SPRAVATO®) is an intranasal formulation of ketamine licensed in Canada for the treatment of moderate to severe major depressive disorder when patients have not responded to other antidepressants alone.

Ketamine is a hallucinogenic drug that is licensed in Canada for anesthesia. It has also been explored “off label” (i.e., not officially approved by Health Canada) for other uses such as for certain psychiatric conditions.

Safety precautions post-treatment

To comply with federal and provincial driving laws, **individuals treated with (es)ketamine must not drive for 24 hours post-treatment.** During this period, they may also experience cognitive effects and are advised to avoid making major decisions.

Coverage

We may consider coverage for an initial trial when all the following criteria have been met:

- Requested by your treating specialist with completion of our application for trial of ketamine form.
- Preapproval is required. Approval for further treatment will require reporting as determined by WCB to ensure the treatment has been safe and beneficial. An independent specialist consultation may also be required.

