

# Facts about Kamini

## Multani Kaminividravana Rasa, Kamini Vidrawan Ras, KVR

Kamini is an herbal medicine that contains opium. It may also contain high levels of hazardous substances like lead and mercury. It is popular amongst the Southern Asian community and followers of Ayurvedic or Unani medicine. Some people use it in the belief it will help them stay awake so they can work long hours, it will improve sexual function, and help with impotence, premature ejaculation, and erection difficulties.

Kamini comes in the form of small pellets, swallowed like tablets. Barshasha is similar to kamini and comes in the form of a paste; it appears less readily available than kamini. *Kamini and Barshasha are Class B controlled drugs in NZ making them illegal to import, sell, supply, possess or consume.*

## Reducing the harm associated with Kamini use

- No use is safest - especially around babies and children. If using, make arrangements for children to be cared for by someone who is not using
- Avoid using alcohol and other sedatives (downers) such as benzos, tranquilisers, barbiturates with opioids including kamini as mixing them depresses the central nervous system and significantly increases the risk of sedation and overdose
- Stored all drugs and equipment in a childproof area.

## Effects: what the drug does

Testing has found Kamini containing ingredients that pose a serious risk if ingested. For example, exposure to even small amounts of mercury may cause serious health problems, having toxic effects on the nervous, digestive, and immune systems, and on lungs, kidneys, skin, and eyes<sup>1</sup>.

### Harmful effects include lead poisoning

Symptoms of lead poisoning affecting the gastrointestinal and nervous systems include:	Symptoms of lead poisoning affecting the stomach and intestine can include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• mood changes (such as depression or irritability)</li><li>• memory impairment</li><li>• disturbed sleep</li><li>• headaches</li><li>• tingling and numbness in fingers and hands</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lack of appetite</li><li>• nausea</li><li>• diarrhoea or it's opposite, constipation</li><li>• stomach pains</li><li>• weight loss</li></ul>

In later stages, symptoms may develop in the blood, kidneys, bones, heart, and reproductive systems and, in extreme cases, may cause death.

<sup>1</sup> [Multani Kaminividravana Rasa \(Kamini\) tablets | Therapeutic Goods Administration \(TGA\)](#)

### Further risks from use of kamini include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dependence/ addiction meaning people find it difficult to stop using and experience withdrawal symptoms when they do</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overdose: Breathing and other central nervous system activity slows right down to the point where a person can slip into a coma and die</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many fatalities are due to mixing opioids with other depressant drugs like alcohol or benzodiazepines.</li></ul>               |   |

### People who use over a long period of time may develop general ill-health as well as:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chronic constipation</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Loss of appetite, malnutrition</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compromised immune system making it difficult to fight off infections</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduced sex drive due to a decrease in male (testosterone) and female sex hormones</li></ul> |

## Tolerance and dependence

People may start using one tablet a day and, within weeks, rapidly increase to 25–30 tablets or one bottle per day. This is because they have developed a tolerance to the effects; they need more to experience that same initial effect. People also describe experiencing withdrawal symptoms when they tried to stop. Although not their initial intention, people can become dependent on kamini; it becomes central to their thoughts, activities, and emotions.

### Withdrawal symptoms include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Watery eyes</li></ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inability to get comfortable, restlessness</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Constant yawning</li></ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nausea and vomiting</li></ul>                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diarrhoea/stomach upset</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Runny nose</li></ul>                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Body aches, leg cramps</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fast heartbeat</li></ul>                             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hot and cold sweats</li></ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Severe fatigue</li></ul>                             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Craving for the drug</li></ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Insomnia</li></ul>                                   |

These symptoms can occur reasonably quickly - only a few hours after the last dose taken.

Withdrawal symptoms vary from person to person – even if two people have been using the same amount of Kamini and reduce at the same rate, their experience of withdrawal can differ significantly. As a general guide, withdrawal symptoms usually peak at two to four days after the last dose. Symptoms usually weaken and subside after six to seven days. However, people can experience symptoms such as sleep disturbance/ insomnia, depression, and poor stress tolerance for several weeks or even months. Ongoing cravings for the drug can last for months and even years.

CADS have a booklet *Withdrawing from opioids – a guide* which you and your support people may find helpful.

## Looking for help?

If you're looking for more information, or maybe want to talk to someone about opioids or other drug issues for yourself or someone close to you give [Auckland CADS](#) a call on **0800 845-1818**

CADS offer treatment for opioid dependence through Auckland Opioid Treatment Service (AOTS). Research in New Zealand and overseas shows that the healthcare, legal and other social costs related to non-medicinal opioid use are markedly reduced by effective treatment such as methadone and buprenorphine with naloxone.

For confidential advice, support or information on alcohol & drug services contact Alcohol & Drug Helpline on 0800-787-797 10am to 10pm daily