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Taking Control Over Pain

by **Lisa Dawson** in [Education](#)[Bookmark](#)

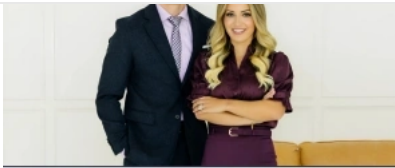
Christi M. vividly remembers the day her son, Daniel, had an infusion of the medication ketamine at a clinic in Plano. Several years earlier, Daniel was in a traumatic and devastating car accident where he nearly lost his life and his leg was almost amputated. The accident left him with the lasting effects of a brain injury, widespread nerve pain, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression. For years afterward, he could not drive a car without medication to combat anxiety. He had been in all sorts of therapy for insomnia, depression and anxiety and nothing worked. Yet, after just one treatment of a ketamine infusion, many of his symptoms were alleviated, if not gone entirely. "When he came out of the office after his first treatment, his face was shining and he was smiling," Christi shares. "There were tears in his eyes and he told me it felt like he had months of burdens taken off him in one hour. It was like the son I knew before the accident was back."

Since his very first treatment with ketamine, Daniel has continued to improve. After six treatments, he is planning on attending school again and Christi says his nerve pain, a problem that plagued him for years, is completely gone.

What is ketamine and is it a miracle drug? According to some patients and medical professionals, it just might be. Although not FDA-approved for treating pain and depression, it is currently being used by medical professionals "off-label" and having some astounding results.

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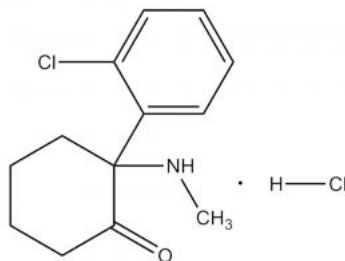




Ketamine is not new to the world of medicine. It is listed as one of the Top 10 Essential Drugs by the World Health Organization. It was developed in 1962 by pharmaceutical scientist Calvin Stevens at Parke-Davis, America's oldest and largest drug maker, now a subsidiary of Pfizer. It was approved for human use in the 1970s during the Vietnam War and used as surgical anesthesia to help injured soldiers. Because it is fast-acting, soldiers could administer it to each other and, therefore, it was considered very valuable on the battlefield. For the next few decades, ketamine would continue to be used in hospitals as a general anesthetic during surgeries. It has been used for veterinary purposes and, more recently, to treat patients with PTSD and neuropathic pain, yet the long-term effects of ketamine are not totally known.

With its reputation as a party drug, for many people, the mention of the word "ketamine" has a negative connotation. Young adults and college students have used and some become addicted to ketamine in its street form, known as "Special K" or "Vitamin K." It gained popularity in the club scene due to its dreamlike, dissociative effects and its ability to cause hallucinations. Abuse of the drug, which can be snorted, injected or taken as a pill, can be fatal. When used in an uncontrolled environment, it causes abnormal heart rhythms, high or low blood pressure and respiratory failure.

Jerron C. Hill, MD founded the Ketamine Health & Wellness Center of Texas in March 2016. Since then, he has treated more than 50 patients and performed nearly 200 ketamine infusions. Dr. Hill is a board-certified anesthesiologist and has been practicing medicine for more than 25 years. He says he researched ketamine and its potential for treating anxiety, depression and pain for more than a year after reading an article in *Anesthesiology News*, a trade magazine for medical professionals. "After I read the article, I knew there was a need in this area," he says. When discussing the abuse of ketamine, Dr. Hill says medical science, to date, has not caught up to what is happening in a clinical setting. "Ketamine is very safe when you use it for the right reason. If you are a drug seeker and use it for the wrong reason, you can become addicted to it."



Dr. Hill says ketamine works in the brain and in the spinal column, essentially re-wiring parts of the brain. "It helps repair the parts of the brain that have died and withered away due to chronic stress. Ketamine helps re-grow the parts of the brain," he says. "I can tell you that the results are varied, but very remarkable."

According to Dr. Hill, 70 percent of patients resistant to depression medication respond to ketamine. "It can relieve suicidal depression in hours, not weeks, like other medications," he says. "We typically do six stabilization treatments over a two-week period. Most of the patients I have treated have not had to come back. Patients can come back for booster infusion. Some patients may require more."

new drug. After I read about it and talked with Dr. Hill, I was not concerned at all.”

Treatments can be expensive — an estimated \$400-\$800 per infusion. Insurance does not cover ketamine therapy, so patients bear the full cost. While ketamine itself is a relatively inexpensive drug, the amount used for a typical infusion is around \$10. It is the ancillary costs of establishing the IV drip, vitals monitoring, etc., that drive the cost. For Christi and Daniel, the cost did not deter them. “It is worth every cent. You have your life back almost immediately.”

Bonnie W. lives in McKinney and is also one of Dr. Hill’s patients. Bonnie says she suffered from daily migraines that were so painful and debilitating, she could no longer work. “I have had migraine headaches since I was in high school. In the last five years, they have become overwhelming. I was missing so much work. I had to quit the job I had for 14 years. Every day, by 2 p.m., I was on the couch with pain.”

Bonnie says she met with Dr. Hill and he told her she would be a good candidate for an infusion. “All these doctors say they have the perfect medication, and within two or three weeks your pain will be gone, but nothing worked. I was afraid ketamine would be just like that.” Bonnie says she knew ketamine was different after her first treatment. “I went home that night and I had no pain. And I have had no side effects since starting treatments.”

For Bonnie, ketamine has been a life-changing experience. She says she is now back to work and, although she still gets headaches, the pain is manageable. “When you are where I was and you are looking for another way out, you will do just about anything,” she says. “It changed my life. If you are at the end of your rope, look into it.”

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Sweeter Than Honey

by **Christine Perrenot** in [Dining](#)

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Recently, on a crisp winter morning, two of my best friends met me at Tupelo Honey, a new restaurant located at The Star. Known for its revival of Southern classics, craft cocktails and unique seasonal dishes, I had heard rumors that Tupelo Honey was the place to be for brunch on any given Saturday morning. It was one of those extremely rare days when none of us were on a tight time schedule and we could really kick back, enjoy some delicious food and catch up. I had received a number of glowing endorsements about Tupelo Honey, and I could not wait to see for myself what all the hype was about!

When you walk through the front doors, you are immediately immersed in a rustic but upscale atmosphere – almost like a modern farmhouse. Gorgeous tiles line the floor in the bar area, located in front of the entryway, which boasts exposed beams and open shelving, showing off the restaurant’s impressive collection of libations. The space is open and features a variety of types of seating and tables. The aroma of home cooked meals that lingered in the air was enough to make my stomach growl.



unique variety of Southern favorites, and even made suggestions as to what his favorite dishes were.



We took a second to settle in, warmed up and then ordered our beverages. I needed a caffeine fix, as soon as possible, and I was hoping for some sort of cold or iced coffee ... even though it was chilly outside. Our waiter suggested I try the Nitro Flash Brew Coffee. My friends decided to get a Tupelo Bloody Mary carafe, a popular brunch item from the creative cocktail offerings. Though unfamiliar, the coffee I ordered was excellent! It was strong and had a dark roasted flavor. It tasted very smooth and was even served in an adorable glass. The Bloody Mary carafe looked magnificent. The restaurant's take on the traditional brunch drink includes Dixie black pepper vodka and house-made mix that is poured into glasses featuring pimento cheese-stuffed olives, pickled okra and lime salt rims. Upon the very first sip of the fancy cocktail (which looked like a meal in itself), my friend stated that it was, hands-down, the best Bloody Mary she had ever tasted!



We made a toast to our time together and continued perusing the brunch menu. I had also been told about the amazing biscuits and jam Tupelo Honey serves, so we placed an order for the Cathead Biscuits and decided to also try the Blue Cheese and Bacon Chef's Mason Jar Dip. It was becoming increasingly obvious that we were about to be indulging in a large portion of food during this meal.

While we waited, we noted how relaxing and eclectic the playlist of music was and even how cute the silverware and napkins on the table looked. The farmhouse atmosphere was relaxing and made us feel right at home. Everyone wants to find a place they can go for any occasion, time after time, and feel like they fit right in. We knew quickly that we had found a new hangout.

After only a few minutes, the Cathead Biscuits arrived. The word "ginormous" does not even begin to describe the size of these fluffy, buttery, peppered biscuits. They were served with house-made blueberry jam and whipped butter, which (guilty as charged), I could not get enough of. The blend of the two flavors in the spread was outstanding ... almost addicting ... and the biscuits practically melt in your mouth. Not long after that, our Blue Cheese and Bacon Dip arrived. The plate was covered in hand-cut potato chips and fresh carrots. The presentation was right in line with the restaurant's theme and came served in an adorable mason jar. The creamy dip almost had a spicy element to it. It was thick and of an outstanding blend of bold flavors.



One friend put in his order for the Shoo Mercy Sweet Potato Pancakes, while the other ordered the Chicken Fried Steak. I, on the other hand, took our waiter's advice and ordered the popular Honey Dusted Fried Chicken.

I ordered the fried chicken with a side of bacon and eggs cooked over-easy, since the dish came with two sides. When they brought our meal out, I gasped out loud when I saw the amount of food that was stacked on the plate! Unbelievable! The fried chicken was crispy, flavorful and just like my grandmother used to cook it. At Tupelo Honey, the meat is brined for 24 hours before it is fried and sprinkled with "bee dust." The eggs were cooked to perfection, topped with large flakes of black pepper and the bacon had an almost sweet taste to it.

Hayden's Shoo Mercy Sweet Potato Pancakes were stacked on his plate and topped with a hearty serving of buttermilk fried chicken. This dish was served with apple cider bacon, spiced pecans, eggs, a grilled apple and pickled blueberries. The mixture of salty and sweet seemed unbeatable. He also mentioned how unique and delicious the grilled apple was. Not only did it add to the presentation of the meal on his plate, but it was tasty, too!



Brittany's Chicken Fried Steak was piping hot, tender and was served with over-medium eggs, crispy tobacco onions, a boiled peanut spread, steak sauce and dressed greens on top of (yet another) open-faced cathead biscuit. Let's just say she needed a to-go box because her eyes may have been bigger than her stomach.

If there is no such thing as dessert for brunch, we invented it when we decided we could not leave without trying the Bacon Pralines. For those of you who are unfamiliar with Bacon Pralines (like we were), the two strips of bacon are covered in caramelized brown sugar and toasted pecans. My mouth is watering just thinking about it! I believe any dish including bacon cannot be beat and Tupelo Honey took a simple breakfast side and added some spunk and sweetness to make it even better.



I wish I could completely re-create what our meal and time spent at Tupelo Honey was like. It was one of the most pleasant, relaxing and unique dining experiences I have had in a very long time. As we walked out the doors, bellies full from taste testing a little bit of everything, I was already itching to write about our delightful experience there.

Tupelo Honey is located at 6725 Winning Drive in Frisco. While you may be committed to your New Year's resolution of trying to lose a few pounds, plan to have your first "cheat meal" at Tupelo Honey, which also serves lunch and dinner. If you have some time to kill, enjoy a shaken, muddled or mixed craft cocktail made with hand-made syrup during Happy Hour, which happens every day from 4-7 p.m. During this time, you



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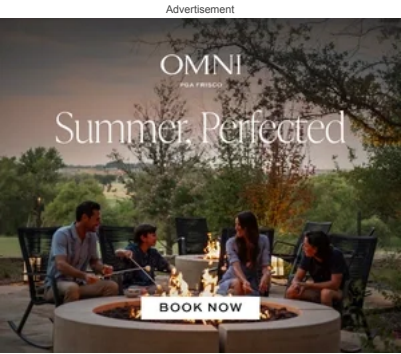
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