




# GENERAL AYAHUASCA MEDICAL GUIDELINES

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The safety and health of the participants in our Ayahuasca journeys is our utmost concern. Therefore, it is absolutely critical that all participants disclose any known medical conditions and/or the use of any prescription or non-prescription medication or supplements during their registration process prior to participation in our journeys. During the registration process, potential participants are required to confirm that they do not have any serious medical condition(s), physical or mental, that could potentially be a complication in conjunction with the use of Ayahuasca.

If you do suffer from a medical condition listed in our Medical Guidelines, please reach out to us via email at [intake@reunionexperience.org](mailto:intake@reunionexperience.org) prior to completing your registration process, and a member of the Reunion team will respond.

**By attending one of our journeys, all participants agree that they are participating at their own risk and that Reunion does not accept liability for any accident or injury to their person. The advice provided by Reunion is based upon our experienced understanding of the use of Ayahuasca and potential health complications, however please consult your doctor or other medical professional for questions regarding medical conditions and medications. It is important to follow your doctor's advice when tapering off medications, especially anti-depressants.**

**All decisions on whether your health is suitable for inclusion in our journeys are made strictly with your safety in mind.**



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# MEDICAL CONDITIONS

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If you suffer from a particular medical condition that is not covered below, please send an email to [intake@reunionexperience.org](mailto:intake@reunionexperience.org) prior to booking a journey. Although Ayahuasca use under supervised conditions is generally considered safe, some medical conditions can have moderate to very serious complications in regards to the use of Ayahuasca. If you have any kidney, liver, heart, other serious medical condition(s), or if you or an immediate family member has a history of seizures, you must inform us prior to booking a journey at Reunion to discuss your particular situation. In every medical case, always discuss the use of a reversible MAOI with your doctor prior to booking.

## Diabetes

People with diabetes have extra risk involved with the consumption of Ayahuasca. The use of the MAOIs present in Ayahuasca can alter blood sugar levels through hypoglycemic effects. MAOIs may change the amount of insulin or oral antidiabetic medication that you need. People with severe unstable diabetes should not take Ayahuasca because of this risk. People with less severe diabetes should contact us prior to booking a journey to discuss the particulars of the case, including the possibility of a modified diet.

## Epilepsy / Seizures

If you or an immediate family member has a history of epilepsy and/or seizures, you **must** inform Reunion prior to booking a journey. Use of plant medicines like Ayahuasca, if not managed and monitored correctly, can induce a seizure if you have a prior family history of epilepsy.

## **Liver and Kidney Conditions**

The use of Ayahuasca can be stressful for the liver and kidneys. The liver and kidneys play essential roles in the metabolism of exogenous and endogenous chemicals. Ayahuasca contains harmine and related alkaloids, which act as inhibitors of monoamine oxidase. This inhibition activity occurs in the liver and gastrointestinal tract. If a participant has various monoamines still present in their system from diet, environmental exposure, medical condition, or use of pharmaceutical or illicit drugs, these would accumulate in the presence of an MAOI and would add further stress for the liver and kidneys.

If you have a history of chronic renal or liver disease you must be cleared by your physician to attend.

## **Heart / Cardiovascular Conditions**

If you have a chronic heart condition or high blood pressure it is not advisable to participate in the drinking of Ayahuasca. The use of Ayahuasca can elevate blood pressure and can pose serious and/or fatal risk to those with serious heart conditions or high blood pressure. Having such serious conditions would exclude you from participation in one of our journeys. Potential participants with minor heart conditions are welcome to discuss the matter with the staff at Reunion prior to booking a journey.

## **Hypothyroidism**

If you have a hypothyroidism condition, it is generally safe to partake in the use of Ayahuasca; however, you must inform Reunion of your condition so that we can closely monitor your dosage during your Ayahuasca ceremonies. You also may continue using your hypothyroid medication (synthetic hormones, such as synthroid) during your journey experience without complication.

# PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

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People suffering from borderline disorders, bipolar disorders, psychosis, and schizophrenia (including drug-induced) are at psychological risk if they use Ayahuasca. At this time, serious borderline and bipolar cases, psychosis cases, and schizophrenia would exclude your participation from a journey at Reunion. If you suffer from minor borderline or bipolar disorders and would like to discuss your specific case with us, please do so prior to booking a journey. In general, Ayahuasca has been shown to have positive general psychological effects on participants. If you suffer from depression, stress, OCD, or anxiety, please contact us about the specifics of your condition, including any prescribed medications, prior to booking a journey at Reunion.

# POLICY REGARDING MEDICATIONS

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All medications taken within the past year must be disclosed in confidence on Reunion's Intake Form prior to completing the registration process. Failure to do so will put you and your health at risk.

In general, one should not be taking any other substances or medications, including herbal medicines, when taking Ayahuasca or dieting other medicinal plants, both for your safety and to not interfere with the efficacy of the plants or their energies. All prescription medications, certain supplements, and illegal drugs should be ceased at least 2 to 8 weeks prior to drinking Ayahuasca depending on the specific type of medication or supplement.

Synthetic hormones taken for hypothyroidism are an exception. You may continue to take your hypothyroid medication during your course of Ayahuasca, but are still required to inform Reunion that you are taking the medication.

Many over the counter medications, such as antihistamines, require only 48 hours of non-use prior to Ayahuasca, although we still recommend ceasing them 2 weeks in advance.

Specific medications, such as MAOIs and SSRIs, pose substantial health complications in conjunction with Ayahuasca and therefore require a longer cessation period. Please consult the comprehensive list in the subsequent pages for detailed descriptions of specific medications and the recommended cessation period. And remember, always consult your doctor when ceasing any prescription medication. Some medications have moderate to serious withdrawal effects, so added time might be necessary to safely ween yourself off your medication(s). When consulting your doctor, please inform them that you will be taking a reversible MAOI.

## **Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOIs)** **Cease 4 to 6 Weeks Prior to Journey**

Ayahuasca is a very potent natural MAOI and should not be used in combination with other MAOIs. Combining MAOIs can lead to complications in the regulation of neurotransmitters and digestion, such as hypertensive crisis, convulsive seizures, fever, delirium, coma, and circulatory collapse. Withdrawal symptoms are possible when ceasing prescription MAOIs, so it is important to consult a doctor as to how to taper off one's dosage. Why? Monoamine oxidase is an enzyme responsible for clearing certain neurotransmitter chemicals from the brain. When the activity of this enzyme is inhibited, the brain has more norepinephrine, serotonin, and dopamine available to send important messages and regulate mood states. This enzyme is also important in the digestive process.

### **Medications Include:**

Marplan (isocarboxazid), Nardil (phenelzine), Emsam, Eldepryl, and Zelapar (selegiline), Parnate (tranylcypromine), Aurorix and Manerix (moclobemide), Pirazidol (pirlindole).

## **SELECTIVE SEROTONIN REUPTAKE INHIBITORS (SSRIs)** **Cease 6 to 8 Weeks Prior to Journey** **Abstain From Use 4 Weeks After Journey**

The combination of Ayahuasca (an MAOI) and SSRIs is potentially life-threatening. Any medication which has an effect on the serotonin system, such as SSRIs, can induce

serotonin syndrome in conjunction with Ayahuasca. It is extremely important that you give the medication enough time to leave your system and give yourself time to adjust to not being on your medication as side effects from stopping your medication may arise. Prozac requires stoppage 8 weeks prior to drinking Ayahuasca due to its longer half-life. All other SSRIs require 6 weeks.

Do not stop taking your medication without consulting your doctor first. Why? Ayahuasca is an MAOI which allows for certain neurotransmitters, such as serotonin, to become more available in the brain. SSRIs inhibit the reuptake of serotonin. The combination of these two substances will cause an excess and/or overload of serotonergic activity in the central nervous system and peripheral serotonin receptors.

### **Medications Include:**

Celexa (citalopram), Lexapro and CipraleX (escitalopram), Luvox (fluvoxamine), Paxil and Seroxat (paroxetine), Prozac (fluoxetine), Zoloft and Lustral (sertraline). Other anti-depressants than those listed above: Cease 6 weeks prior and abstain 4 weeks after your journey.

Anti-depressants other than SSRIs, such as serotonin-norepinephrine inhibitors (SNRIs), serotonin antagonist and reuptake inhibitors (SARIs), norepinephrine inhibitors (NRIs), norepinephrine-dopamine reuptake inhibitors (NDRIs), tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs), tetracyclic antidepressants (TeCAs), noradrenergic and specific serotonergic antidepressants (NaSSAs), and serotonin modulator and stimulators (SMSs) can pose serious complications in conjunction with drinking Ayahuasca.

If combined with an MAOI, one can have an overload of the neurotransmitter leading to serious health complications. It is extremely important that you give the medication enough time to leave your system and give yourself time to adjust to not being on your medication as side effects from stopping your medication may arise.

Do not stop taking your medication without consulting your doctor first. Why? Ayahuasca is an MAOI which allows for certain neurotransmitters to be more available in the brain. Other anti-depressants also alter brain neurochemistry leading to possible serious health complications when combined.



### **SNRI Medications Include:**

Pristiq (desvenlafaxine), Cymbalta (duloxetine), Fetzima (levomilnacipran), Ixel and Savella (milnacipran), Effexor (venlafaxine).

### **SARI Medications Include:**

Axiomin and Etonin (etoperidone), Serzone and Nefadar (nefazodone), YM-992, YM-35,995 (lubazodone), Desyrel (trazodone).

### **NRI Medications Include:**

Strattera (atomoxetine), Edronax (reboxetine), Vivalan (viloxazine), NDRIs: Wellbutrin and Zyban (bupropion).

### **TCA Medications Include:**

Elavil and Endep (amitriptyline), Evadene (butriptyline), Anafril (clomipramine), Norpramin and Pertofrane (desipramine), Prothiaden (dosulepin, dothiepin), Adapin and Sinequan (doxepin), Tofranil (imipramine), Prondol (iprindole), Feprapax, Gamanil, Lomont (lofepramine), Pamelor (nortriptyline), Insidon (opipramol), Vavactil (protriptyline), Surmontil (trimipramine).

### **TeCA and NaSSA Medications Include:**

Asendin (amoxapine), Ludiomil (maprotiline), Lumin, Bolvidon, Norval, Tolvon (mianserin), Remeron (mirtazapine), SMSs: Viibryd (vilazodone), Brintellix (vortioxetine).

### **Anti-depressants or other drugs containing MAO inhibitors or SSRIs:**

Prozac, Seroxat, Zoloft, Effexor, Paxil, Welbutrin (bupropion) ñ also sold as Zyban as an aid therapy to curb the urge to smoke – or similar medication. Anti-stress medication such as Valium, Xanax and similar.

# **CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM (CNS) DEPRESSANTS & SLEEPING PILLS**

## ***Cease 3 to 4 Weeks Prior to Journey***

CNS depressants, such as certain anti-anxiety medications and sleeping aids, should not be used in conjunction with Ayahuasca due to serious health risk. The use of Ayahuasca can increase the depressant effects of CNS depressants leading to slower brain activity, heart rhythm, and respiration.

CNS depressants include benzodiazepines, sleep medications, and barbiturates. CNS depressants have a shorter half-life and therefore can be ceased 3 weeks prior to drinking Ayahuasca. Dependency on CNS depressants can arise easily, so withdrawal symptoms may arise when ceasing your medication. Please consult your doctor for help.

### **Benzodiazepines Include:**

Valium (diazepam), Xanax (alprazolam), Halcion (triazolam), and ProSom (estazolam).

### **Non-Benzodiazepines Sleep Medications Include:**

Ambien (zolpidem), Lunesta (eszopiclone), Sonata (zalepon).

### **Barbituates Include:**

Mebaral (mephobarbital), Luminal Sodium (phenobarbital), Nembutal (pentobarbital), and any other barbiturate.

## **ANTI-HYPERTENSIVES (BLOOD PRESSURE MEDICATIONS)**

### ***Cease 2 to 6 Weeks Prior to Journey (Medication Dependant)***

There are many classes of antihypertensives, which lower blood pressure by different means; among the most important and most widely used are thiazide diuretics, ACE inhibitors, calcium channel blockers, beta blockers, and angiotensin II receptor antagonists.

Always ask your doctor about coming off your medication, and please inform them that you will be taking a reversible MAOI.

#### **Beta Blockers Include:**

Atenolol, Metoprolol, Nadolol, Nebivolol, Oxprenolol, Pindolol, Propanolol, and Timolol.

#### **Alpha Blockers Include:**

Doxazosin, Phentolamine, Indoramin, Phenoxybenzamine, Prazosin, Terazosin, and Tolazoline.

#### **Mixed Alpha & Beta Blockers Include:**

Bucindolol, Carvedilol, and Labetalol.

#### **Calcium Channel Blockers Include:**

Amlodipine, Clinidipine, Diltiazem, Felodipine, Isradipine, Lercanidipine, Levamlodipine, Nicardipine, Nifedipine, Nimodipine, Nitrendipine, and Verapamil.

#### **Ace Inhibitors Include:**

Benazepril, Captopril, Enalapril, Fosinopril, Lisinopril, Perindopril, Quinapril, Ramipril, and Trandolapril.

#### **Angiotensin II Receptor Antagonists Include:**

Candesartan, Eprosartan, Irbesartan, Losartan, Olmesartan, Telmisartan, and Valsartan.

## **ANTIBIOTIC THERAPIES**

***Cease 1 Week Prior to Journey***

***Abstain From Use 1 Week After Journey***

Antibiotic therapy may cause potentially adverse reactions with the use of Ayahuasca. Discontinue the use of this medication and any of the following for at least 1 week before and until 1 week after taking the Ayahuasca medicine.

### **Antibiotics Include:**

Phenylalanine, non-prescription drugs like antihistamines, systemic vase-constrictors or decongestants ñ both natural (ephedrine) and synthetic formulations (Pseudo-ephedrine and similar) ñ normally used in case of cold and flu, asthma inhalers, or drugs with high content of caffeine. Narcotics, sedatives, tranquilizers, antihypertensive agents (used to treat high blood pressure ñ only in chronic cases), analgesics like meperidine, antiparkinson drugs like Levopoda, drugs used to treat heart conditions, like Dopamine (brand name: Intropin), neurological prescriptions like Carbamazipine (a drug that eliminates seizures), and sympathomimetic drugs (substances that mimic the effects of the hormones adrenaline and noradrenaline) like amphetamine and tyrosine.

## **HERBAL MEDICINES & SUPPLEMENTS**

***Cease 48 Hours Prior to Journey (Except St. John's Wort)***

### **Herbal Medicines & Supplements Include:**

Betel, Boswellia, Carrot Seed, Curcumin, Dill Seed, Ephedra, Fennel Seed, Fo-Ti, Ginseng, Horny Goat Weed, Kanna, Kava, Kratom, Licorice Root, Nutmeg, Parsley Seed, Rhodiola Rosea, Scotch Broom, Siberian Ginseng, Sinicuichi, Tumeric, Yerba Mate, and Yohimbe.



# ILLEGAL OR RECREATIONAL DRUGS

## Cease 2 Week Prior to Journey:

Stimulants, Depressants, and Psychoactives.

## The following illegal or recreational drugs should under no circumstances be combined with Ayahuasca:

Cocaine, Amphetamines and derivatives of amphetamines, MDMA (Ecstasy), MDA or its derivatives, and Dextromethorphan (DXM).

## The following pose a lesser risk but should NOT be combined with Ayahuasca:

Opiates, Mescaline (any phenethylamine), Barbiturates, and other psychoactives.

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