



# MEDICAL GUIDELINES

As an Ayahuasca healing centre, the safety and health of our Guests is our priority and biggest concern. Our Ayahuasca medical guidelines are set in order to be sure that you start your retreat in safe and healthy conditions. For this reason, it is necessary that you inform us, in 100% confidence, about your mental and physical health and any use of medication at the time of your booking with Sanken Nete. We work with a Senior Nurse who supervises all the questionnaires in order to make sure you are safe to embark on your Ayahuasca experience.

Please read the information on this page carefully to ensure your own safety, discuss your retreat with your doctor in relation to your personal health condition and contact us if you have any further questions.

---

## PHYSICAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

- \* If you have any high blood pressure or a cardiovascular heart condition you can not participate in ceremonies. Ayahuasca can elevate the blood pressure and increase heart attack risks.
- \* If you have diabetes there is more risk involved with the absorption of Ayahuasca. The use of the MAOIs present in Ayahuasca can alter blood sugar levels via hypoglycemic effects. MAOIs may change the amount of insulin or oral antidiabetic medication that is needed by your body. 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 retreat to discuss the particulars of the case including the possibility of a modified diet and approach.
- \* If you or an immediate family member has a history of epilepsy and/or seizures, you must inform us prior to booking a retreat. Use of Ayahuasca, if not properly managed and monitored, can induce a seizure if you have a prior family history of epilepsy.
- \* If you have a liver or kidney condition there is more risk involved with the absorption of Ayahuasca. The liver and the 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 hypothyroidism condition, it is generally safe to partake in the use of Ayahuasca; however, you must inform us of your condition, so that we can closely monitor your dosage during your course of Ayahuasca. You also may continue using your hypothyroid medication (synthetic hormones, such as synthroid) during your retreat experience without complication.



\* If you have tuberculosis you must not take Ayahuasca.

\* Apparently, there are no contradictions that we know of with pregnancy and drinking Ayahuasca, however, there is not enough medical research to support this and as a centre that cares about the safety and well-being of our Guests, we would not like to take risks with any possible pregnancy complications that might affect mothers to be or their babies. In order to avoid any possible contraindications, we do not advise pregnant women to attend our retreats.

## MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

\* If you have a (family) history of bipolar disorder or schizophrenia you should realise you are at an increased risk for the expression of these conditions and their symptoms and you must inform us about this. It is also possible that Ayahuasca can unmask such symptoms in predisposed individuals. If you contact us we will look into the possibility of participating in a retreat on an individual basis.

\* If you suffer from depression Ayahuasca has shown good abilities to heal people. Please inform us when booking to discuss your personal case. The use of antidepressants and Ayahuasca can be a dangerous combination. If you are using any antidepressants it is very important that you stop using them before attending the retreat. You will need to stop using this medication on time to give your system sufficient time to remove them from the body. Please read our medication policy for more information.

## ILLEGAL OR RECREATIONAL DRUGS

Using stimulants with MAOIs is particularly dangerous and can be potentially fatal. Using cocaine, amphetamines or MDMA (Ecstasy) with MAOIs may cause a severe increase in blood pressure, increasing the chances for stroke and cerebral haemorrhage, making it possible to overdose on a relatively small amount of cocaine. (A fatality has been recorded involving combining Peganum harmala and cocaine. Fatalities resulting from combining amphetamines with pharmaceutical MAOIs are also recorded in the medical literature). Using other serotonin agonists or precursors with an MAOI can lead to serotonin syndrome. The main symptom of serotonin syndrome may be a severe and long-lasting headache (the same symptom as MAOI tryptamine interaction) and/or fever (as high as 40 °C / 104 °F or more) Other symptoms of serotonin syndrome may include rapid heartbeat, shivering, sweating, dilated pupils, intermittent tremor or twitching, overactive or over-responsive reflexes, hyperactive bowel sounds, high blood pressure. Severe serotonin syndrome may lead to shock, agitated delirium, muscular rigidity and high muscular tension, renal failure, seizures, and can be life-threatening.



Illegal or recreational drugs that are dangerous to combine with MAOIs: Cocaine, Amphetamines (meth-, dex-, amphetamine), MDMA (Ecstasy), MDA, MDEA, PMA, Dextromethorphan (DXM), Opiates, Barbiturates, Kratom, Kava.

Smoking marijuana before the Ayahuasca ceremony may possibly darken the overall experience acting as a blockage for the visionary plant to manifest in its full potential. Given the general amplified sensitivity of all participants of an Ayahuasca session, marijuana can sometimes negatively affect not just the person who used it, but also potentially other participants' experiences as well as the overall energy level of the medicine circle. Again, this is a rather "grey zone" and may vary from case to case, however, we do not recommend marijuana usage prior/post to our retreats.

---

You should seek professional medical advice on preparations prior to travelling to Peru. Taking vaccinations is something we will leave to your personal preference as travelling to Peru might include slight risks of contracting malaria, dengue fever etc. We have never had a single case of any of these diseases and have not heard of anyone contracting them since the temple was founded, however, cannot guarantee that it will not happen. For drinking Ayahuasca, it would be better to have a body clean from vaccines/pills, however, this decision will be entirely up to our Guests to decide. For the safety and well-being of all Guests, if we suspect that street drugs or alcohol have been taken immediately prior to arrival at the Temple, we reserve the right to refuse admission to participation. We need to offer this advice and insist on these conditions in order to assure your personal safety and the overall welfare of the group. By coming to our retreat, you are declaring that you are in a physical and mental condition appropriate to the activities described in the workshop programs, and agree that you participate at your own risk. Sanken Nete cannot accept liability for any accident or injury.



# MEDICATION POLICY

All medications taken within the past year must be disclosed in confidence to Sanken Nete 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 not to 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 Sanken Nete 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 below 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 him that you will be taking a reversible MAOI.

## **MONOAMINE OXIDASE INHIBITORS (MAOIS): 4 – 6 WEEKS PRIOR TO CEREMONY.**

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



## SELECTIVE SEROTONIN REUPTAKE INHIBITORS (SSRIS): 6 OR 8 WEEKS PRIOR TO CEREMONY, 4 WEEKS AFTER CEREMONY.

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: Celexa (citalopram), Lexapro and Ciprallex (escitalopram), Luvox (fluvoxamine), Paxil and Seroxat (paroxetine), Prozac (fluoxetine), Zoloft and Lustral (sertraline)

## OTHER ANTI-DEPRESSANTS: 6 WEEKS PRIOR TO CEREMONY, 4 WEEKS AFTER CEREMONY

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.

Medications: SNRIs: Pristiq (desvenlafaxine), Cymbalta (duloxetine), Fetzima (levomilnacipran), Ixel and Savella (milnacipran), Effexor (venlafaxine), SARIs: Axiomin and Etonin (etoperidone), Serzone and Nefadar (nefazodone), YM-992, YM-35,995 (lubazodone), Desyrel (trazodone), NRIs: Strattera (atomoxetine), Edronax (reboxetine), Vivalan (viloxazine), NDRIs: Wellbutrin and Zyban (bupropion), TCAs: 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), TeCAs and NaSSAs: Asendin (amoxapine), Ludiomil (maprotiline), Lumin, Bolvidon, Norval, Tolvon (mianserin), Remeron (mirtazapine), SMSs: Viibryd (vilazodone), Brintellix (vortioxetine), Anti-depressant or other drug containing MAO inhibitors or SSRIs, i.e. Prozac, Seroxat, Zoloft, Effexor, Paxil, Welbutrin (bupropion) also sold as Zyban as aid therapy to the urge to smoke – or similar medication.

## CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM (CNS) DEPRESSANTS (AND SLEEPING PILLS): 3 TO 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO CEREMONY

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.

Medications: Benzodiazepines: Valium (diazepam), Xanax (alprazolam), Halcion (triazolam), ProSom (estazolam), Non-benzodiazepine sleep medications: Ambien (zolpidem), Lunesta (eszopiclone), Sonata (zalepon), Barbiturates: Mebaral (mephobarbital), Luminal Sodium (phenobarbital), Nembutal (pentobarbital), and any other barbiturate.

## OTHER PRESCRIPTION AND NON-PRESRIPTION MEDICATIONS: 2 TO 3 WEEKS PRIOR TO CEREMONY

All other medications like antihistamines, decongestants, asthma inhalers, medicines for colds, sinus problems, hay fever, drugs with high content of caffeine and appetite suppressants (diet pills).



## HERBS AND HERBAL MEDICATIONS: 2 TO 3 WEEKS PRIOR TO CEREMONY

Also avoid the following herbs as they may cause cutipado, or in other words interfere with the plants energy and provoke unwanted reactions: St. Johns Wort, Kava, Kratom, Ephedra, Ginseng, Yohimbe, Sinicuichi, Rhodiola Rosea, Kanna, Boswellia, Nutmeg, Scotch Broom and Licorice Root.

## ANTIBIOTICS: 1 TO 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO CEREMONY

Antibiotic therapy may cause potentially adverse reactions with the use of Ayahuasca.