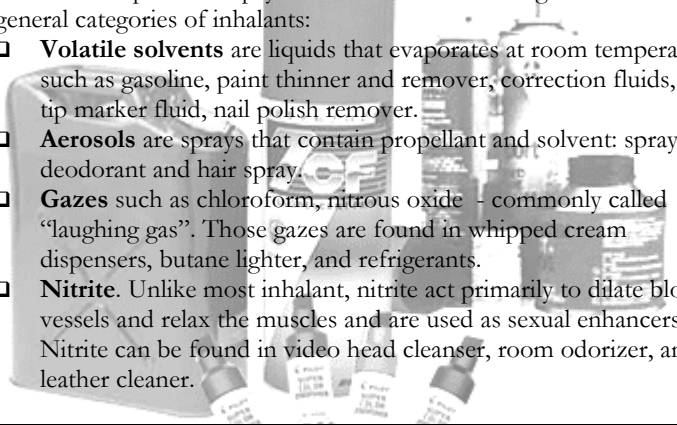


Inhalant Abuse Prevention

What are inhalants?

Inhalants are volatile substances that produce chemical vapors that can be inhaled to produce a psychoactive or mind-altering effect. There are four general categories of inhalants:

- ❑ **Volatile solvents** are liquids that evaporate at room temperature such as gasoline, paint thinner and remover, correction fluids, felt-tip marker fluid, nail polish remover.
- ❑ **Aerosols** are sprays that contain propellant and solvent: spray paint, deodorant and hair spray.
- ❑ **Gases** such as chloroform, nitrous oxide - commonly called "laughing gas". Those gases are found in whipped cream dispensers, butane lighter, and refrigerants.
- ❑ **Nitrite**. Unlike most inhalants, nitrites act primarily to dilate blood vessels and relax the muscles and are used as sexual enhancers. Nitrite can be found in video head cleanser, room odorizer, and leather cleaner.



How are inhalants used?

- Sniffing or snorting fumes from containers.
- Spraying aerosols directly into the mouth or nose
- Bagging: sniffing or inhaling fumes substances sprayed or deposited inside a paper or plastic bag
- Huffing from an inhalant-soaked rag stuffed in the mouth
- Inhaling from balloons filled with nitrous oxide

Signs of abuse:

- Chemical odors on breath and clothing
- Paint or other stains on face, hands or clothes
- Hidden empty spray paint or solvent container and chemical-soaked rags or clothing.
- Drunk, disoriented appearance
- Slurred speech
- Nausea, loss of appetite
- Inattentiveness, lack of coordination, irritability, depression

Is my Child at risk?

Every child is potentially at risk, especially since inhalants are found in commonly used household products (deodorant, whipped cream...). Children as young as 5 experiment with inhalants. One national survey found that about 3% of US children have tried inhalants by the time they reached 4th grade



Health Risks:

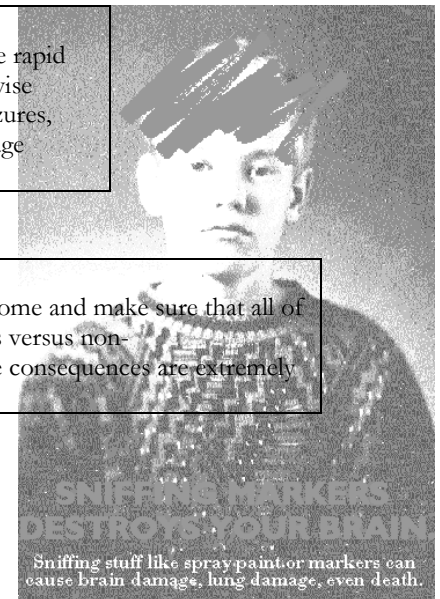
Because of the way they enter the body, inhalants can quickly become fatal; they can induce rapid and irregular heart rhythms leading to heart failure and death within minutes of an otherwise healthy young person. Other risks include asphyxiation, suffocation, convulsions or seizures, coma, choking (from inhalation of vomit after inhalant use) and permanent brain damage affecting hearing, speech, and memory among others.

How can I prevent inhalant abuse?

Talk to your child. Explain to them that what they put in their body can harm them. Take a tour of your home and make sure that all of your chemicals are out of reach. As your child gets older, talk to them about poisonous/chemical fumes versus non-poisonous/chemical ones. Tell them that the human body cannot process those substances and that the consequences are extremely dangerous

Do you want to know more about inhalants? Check those resources out.

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA): www.drugabuse.gov, www.inhalants.drugabuse.gov,
National Inhalant Prevention Coalition: www.inhalant.org



Sources:

National Institute on Drug Abuse, Research Report Series: Inhalant Abuse
www.drugabuse.gov, Info Facts on Inhalants.

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