

Every year, young people in this country die of inhalant abuse.

Hundreds suffer severe consequences including permanent brain damage, loss of muscle control, and destruction of the heart, blood, kidney, liver and bone marrow.

## How can you tell if a young person is an inhalant abuser?

If someone is an inhalant abuser, some or all of these symptoms will be evident:

- Unusual breath odor or chemical odor on clothing
- Slurred or disoriented speech
- Drunk, dazed or dizzy appearance
- Signs of paint or other products where they wouldn't normally be, such as on the face or fingers.
- Red or runny eyes or nose
- Spots and/or sores around the mouth
- Nausea and/or loss of appetite
- Chronic inhalant abusers may exhibit such symptoms as anxiety, excitability, irritability, or restlessness

Other telltale behaviors:

- Sitting with a pen or marker near nose
- Constantly smelling clothing sleeves
- Showing paint or stain marks on the face, fingers, or clothing
- Hiding rags, clothes, or empty containers of potentially abused products in closets and other places.

Many youngsters say they begin sniffing when they are in grade school. They start because they feel these substances can't hurt them, because of peer pressure, or because of low self-esteem.

Once hooked, these victims find it a tough habit to break.

## ASSOCIATED PRESS STORIES OF INHALANT DEATHS

A 13 year old boy was inhaling fumes from cleaning fluid and became ill a few minutes afterwards. Witnesses alerted the parents, and the victim was hospitalized and placed on life support systems. He died 24 hours after the incident

A 15 year old boy was found unconscious in a backyard. According to three companions, the four teenagers had taken a propane tank from the family's grill in plastic bag and inhaled the gas to get high. The victim collapsed shortly after inhaling the gas. He died on the way to the hospital.

### What can you do to prevent inhalant abuse?

One of the most important steps you can take is to talk to your children or other youngsters about not experimenting a first time with inhalants.

In addition, talk with your children's teachers, guidance counselors, and coaches.

By discussing this problem openly and stressing the devastating consequences of inhalant abuse, you can help prevent a tragedy.

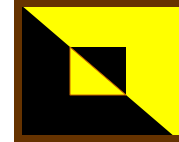
### If you suspect your child or someone you know is an inhalant abuser, what can you do to help?

If you suspect there's a problem, you should consider seeking professional help.

Contact a local drug rehabilitation center or contact:

**THE NATIONAL  
INHALANT  
PREVENTION  
COALITION**  
**1-800-269-4237**

or at  
[www.inhalants.org](http://www.inhalants.org)



The Make A Promise  
Coalition for a Drug-Free  
Warren County

# Let's Talk about...

# Inhalants

Presented by:  
The Make a Promise Coalition for a  
Drug-Free Community

Sponsored by:  
The Behavioral Health Foundation of  
Central MS, Inc.  
Drug-Free Communities Program  
P.O. Box 820691  
Vicksburg, MS 39182  
(601) 661-0499  
[www.drugfreevicksburg.org](http://www.drugfreevicksburg.org)

## What Are Inhalants?

Inhalants are breathable chemical vapors that produce psychoactive (mind-altering) effects. A variety of products common in the home and in the workplace contain substances that can be inhaled. Many people do not think of these products, such as spray paints, glues, and cleaning fluids, as drugs because they were never meant to be used to achieve an intoxicating effect. Yet, young children and adolescents can easily obtain them and are among those most likely to abuse these extremely toxic substances.

## Extent of Use

Initial use of inhalants often starts early. Some young people may use inhalants as an easily accessible substitute for alcohol. Research suggests that chronic or long-term inhalant abusers are among the most difficult drug abuse patients to treat. Many suffer from cognitive impairment and other neurological dysfunction and may experience multiple psychological and social problems.

Inhalant Abuse:

It's Deadly.  
It Can Kill.



It can kill suddenly, and it can kill those who sniff for the first time.

## Types of Inhalants

### Volatile Solvents

- *Industrial or household solvents or solvent-containing products*, including paint thinners or removers, degreasers, dry-cleaning fluids, gasoline, and glue
- *Art or office supply solvents*, including correction fluids, felt-tip-marker fluid, and electronic contact cleaners

### Aerosols

- *Household aerosol propellants* and associated solvents in items such as spray paints, hair or deodorant sprays, fabric protector sprays, aerosol computer cleaning products, and vegetable oil sprays

### Gases

- *Gases used in household or commercial products*, including butane lighters and propane tanks, whipping cream aerosols or dispensers (whippets), and refrigerant gases
- *Medical anesthetic gases*, such as ether, chloroform, halothane, and nitrous oxide ("laughing gas")

### Nitrites

- *Organic nitrites* are volatiles that include cyclohexyl, butyl, and amyl nitrites, commonly known as "poppers." Amyl nitrite is still used in certain diagnostic medical procedures. Volatile nitrites are often sold in small brown bottles labeled as "video head cleaner," "room odorizer," "leather cleaner," or "liquid aroma."

## What is Inhalant Abuse?

Inhalant abuse is the deliberate inhaling or sniffing of common products found in homes and schools to obtain a "high".

## What are The Effects of Inhalant Abuse?

Sniffing can cause sickness and death. For example, victims may become nauseated, forgetful, and unable to see things clearly. Victims may lose control of their body, including arms and legs. These effects can last 15 to 45 minutes.

In addition, sniffing can severely damage many parts of the body, including the brain, heart, liver, and kidneys.

Even worse, victims can die suddenly—without warning. "Sudden Sniffing Death" can occur during or right after sniffing. The heart begins to overwork, beating rapidly but unevenly, which can lead to cardiac arrest. Even first time users have been known to die from sniffing inhalants.

## What is the typical profile of an inhalant abuser in the U.S.?

There is no typical profile of an inhalant abuser. Victims are represented by both sexes and all socioeconomic groups throughout the U.S. It's not unusual to see elementary and middle-school age youths involved with inhalant abuse.

**They're all over your house. They're in your child's school. In fact, you probably picked some up the last time you went to the grocery store. Educate yourself. Find out about inhalants before your children do.**

