

INHALANT ABUSE

What is it? Inhalant abuse means trying to get high by breathing in something poisonous. Usually, these poisons are ordinary household products.

Who does it? Usually, pre-teens and teenagers. Nearly one in five 8th graders has tried inhalants.

When? Before, during, or after school. Nighttime or weekends.

Where? Anywhere. At home or school. In cars or just hanging out.

Why? In the words of one teen, "Because they can; because they're bored; because they're upset." In short, for any reason or no reason.

How? *Huffing. Bagging. Sniffing.* Pouring a product into a bag and breathing it in. Pouring a product onto a rag or clothing and inhaling. Putting the nozzle into the mouth and taking a deep breath.

So what? *Inhalants kill...*

Virginia Poison Center
1-800-222-1222

THE POISONS RIGHT UNDER YOUR NOSE...

...are also under your sink, in your shed or garage or workroom, in your office, in your yard. They are at school, in stores and at work.

These ordinary, legal products are safe to use according to directions. They are poisons if swallowed or sniffed, huffed, or bagged.

More than a thousand products can be abused by inhaling. Common examples include solvents, aerosols, and fuels:

- Aerosol deodorant
- Air freshener
- Butane
- Computer "duster"
- Correction fluid
- Gasoline
- Glue
- Hairspray
- Helium
- Markers
- Nail polish remover
- Nitrous oxide (whipped cream containers, "whippets")
- Paint thinner
- Propane
- Spray paint

INHALANTS KILL



***THE FIRST TIME,
OR ANY TIME,
.... COULD BE THE LAST TIME.***

What happens? Breathing an inhalant is breathing a poison. The substance goes into the bloodstream right away. Then, it goes to the brain, the heart, and other body organs. Effects may be short term, permanent – or fatal.

Short term effects: Dizziness. Nausea. Headache. Confusion. Slurred speech. Lack of coordination. Passing out.

Long term or permanent effects: Brain damage. Kidney damage. Nerve damage. Bone marrow damage. Muscle damage. Addiction, both physical and psychological.

Every time: "Sudden Sniffing Death" can happen to anyone abusing an inhalant. The heart suddenly stops beating regularly. The brain loses oxygen and death follows rapidly. This can happen the first time... the hundredth time...any time. The body never becomes used to the effects of inhalants.

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PROTECTING YOUR CHILDREN FROM INHALANTS

Preventing inhalant abuse:

- Teach children to use medicines and household products safely. Choose the right medicine or product for the job. Follow label instructions.
- Include inhalants when you teach about substance abuse (drugs, alcohol, tobacco). Emphasize that these are poisons. They are not meant to be used in the body.
- Keep track of inhalants in your home. Where are they? Are they being used up too quickly?

Detecting inhalant abuse

- Large quantities of household products are purchased or missing.
- You find plastic bags, smelly rags, or empty containers.
- Your child has rashes on the face or a chronic sore throat or mouth.
- You smell a chemical odor on your child's breath or clothes.
- There are other signs of substance abuse: changes in behavior, friends, grades, or grooming; changes in weight or health for no obvious reason.

24 hours a day – 7 days a week
Virginia Poison Center
1-800-222-1222

For a poison emergency, and for questions about inhalants and other poisons:

Call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.
Your call is free and confidential. Local experts will help you immediately, 24 hours a day



For questions about inhalant abuse, prevention, and treatment:

National Inhalant Prevention Coalition
1-800-269-4237
www.inhalants.org

For free web-based parent training:

New England Inhalant Abuse Prevention Coalition
www.inhalantprevention.org

For school resources:

Alliance for Consumer Education
www.inhalant.org

For materials and research:

National Institute on Drug Abuse
<http://inhalants.drugabuse.gov>
Virginia Department of Health
<http://www.vahealth.org/civp/topics/inhalant.asp>
Partnership for a Drug Free America
www.drugfree.org

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INHALANT ABUSE

YOUR KIDS KNOW ABOUT IT.

DO YOU?



WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INHALANTS



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Call FAST to treat a poisoning!
Call FIRST to prevent a poisoning

24 hours a day – 7 days a week
www.poison.org

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