

# Inhalants

**SNIFFING, POPPERS, SNAPPERS, AIR BLAST, AMES, BAGGING, BUZZ BOMB, HUFF, WHIPPETS, CLIMAX, HARDWARE, HIPPE CRACK, MEDUSA, MOON GAS, OZ, PEARLS, WHITEOUT, THRUST, SPRAY, RUSH, HEART-ON**

Sometimes items commonly found in homes aren't used for the intended purposes. People can inhale the chemical vapors produced by common household substances—inhalants—to get high. What many of them don't realize is the danger of **INHALANTS**.

Inhalants are used to give the user an immediate head rush or high. Inhalants are “sniffed” from an open container or “huffed” from a rag soaked in the substance and held to the face. A new trend, “dusting,” involves inhaling common computer cleaners (One brand is Dust-Off).

Inhalants considered an alternative to other mood-altering drugs because they are cheap, can be purchased legally and are easy to get. But that doesn't make them safer. Household products are safe for cleaning, painting and the other things they're meant to do, but as inhalants, they can be deadlier than street drugs.

## DIFFERENT KINDS

There are four main types of inhalants: volatile solvents, gases, aerosols and nitrites. Volatile solvents, gases and aerosols can alter moods and create a high. Nitrites are believed to create sexual stimulation and enhancement.

Here is what you need to know about types of inhalants:

- Volatile solvents are liquids that become a gas at room temperature. Some examples are paint thinners, gasoline, glues, correction fluids and felt-tip marker fluids.
- Gases include medical gases (ether, nitrous oxide), and household or commercial products (butane lighters, whipped cream dispensers that contain nitrous oxide, and refrigerants).
- Aerosol sprays are some of the most prevalent in the home

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and they include spray paint, deodorant and hairsprays, vegetable oil cooking sprays and static cling sprays.

- Nitrites include cyclohexyl nitrite, amyl nitrite, and butyl nitrite. On the street, they're called “poppers” or “snappers.” They're found in some room deodorizers and capsules that release vapors when opened.

You can inhale chemical vapors in several ways, including sniffing, snorting or spraying the inhalant directly into the nose or mouth, putting it into a bag and then inhaling from there, putting the vapor onto a rag, or inhaling nitrous oxide from balloons.

Because the high from inhalants only lasts a few minutes, you may inhale over and over again for long periods of time to maintain the high, increasing the amount of dangerous chemicals entering and damaging the body.

Inhalants can cause many changes in your body. Once the vapors enter the system, some are absorbed by parts of the brain and nervous system. All of the inhalants (except nitrites) slow down the body's functions. The effects of getting high are pretty similar to the effects of drinking alcohol—at first the user gets excited, then gets tired, has trouble speaking clearly or walking well, gets dizzy, loses inhibitions, and may get become agitated.

Other short-term effects of inhaling chemicals include increased heart rate, hallucinations or delusions, losing feeling or consciousness, nausea and vomiting, loss of coordination and slurred speech.

Nitrites work differently. Instead of slowing down the brain and the spinal cord, they increase the size of blood vessels and relax the muscles.

Inhalants are commonly found in most homes, and many people don't realize they can be incredibly addictive. People who become addicted to using inhalants are likely to become long-term users. This puts them at risk for the following health problems:

- brain damage (toxic chemicals may make people become slow or clumsy, have trouble solving problems or planning ahead, suffer from memory loss, or become unable to learn new things)
- damage to lungs, liver, kidneys and/or bone marrow
- muscle weakness
- depression
- headaches and nosebleeds
- loss of sense of smell or hearing

## HOW INHALANTS KILL

Like most street drugs, inhalants can be deadly. Someone can die from abusing inhalants after trying it only once. Causes of death include:

- Sudden Sniffing Death—This is the most common cause of death from inhalant use. The heart beats quickly and irregularly, and then suddenly stops (cardiac arrest).
- Asphyxia—Toxic fumes replace oxygen in the lungs so that a person stops breathing.
- Choking—A user can choke on his or her vomit.
- Suffocation—When vapors are inhaled from a plastic bag placed over the head, the bag can block air.
- Injuries—Since people high on inhalants often make poor decisions, they might try to drive under the influence or do something irrational, such as jump off a roof. They could suffer burns or start explosions if a spark ignites flammable inhalants.

SOURCES: NIDA, U.S. DEA