

Inhalant Abuse

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Some products that you have lying around the house, stored in the closet, or in school classrooms could potentially be used in ways that they are not intended and have deadly consequences. Products like glue, paint, lighter fluid, deodorants, and permanent markers are not legally classified as drugs, however, they can be used as deadly chemicals and poisons.

Inhalant abuse can kill

According to the a National Institute on Drug Abuse report, nearly 23 million Americans have abused inhalants at least once in their life, and 17% of eighth-graders report abusing inhalants. There's no fooling around when it comes to inhalants. A first-time user can suffer severe brain damage, respiratory problems, or even death. In the short term, inhalant

abuse can make you sick, forgetful, and unable to see clearly. Long-term consequences include permanent brain damage, hearing loss, liver and kidney damage, increased heart rate, and arm or leg spasms. There is a potential for "Sudden Sniffing Death" for those who use inhalants, even first-time users.

How can I tell if someone I know is abusing inhalants?

Signs of inhalant abuse include:

- unusual breath odor or chemical odor on clothing
- slurred or slowed speech
- paint or other products on face or fingers
- red or runny eyes or nose
- nausea and/or loss of appetite

What can I do to prevent inhalant abuse?

- Education is your best weapon. By knowing the facts and being aware of the dangers you can educate others and hopefully deter teens from trying different inhalants.

- Get together a group of concerned community members (teens, church leaders, law enforcement, store owners, school administrators, teachers, parents, etc.) to address the issue. Coordinate education efforts so that you can reach as many youth as possible.
- Remember that inhalants can be abused by young children -- it is not a problem only affecting teens. Be sure to provide information and education to all age groups.
- Participate in National Inhalants and Poisons Week, March 20-26, 2016.

National Inhalant Prevention Coalition -- www.inhalants.org
National Institute on Drug Abuse -- <http://www.nida.nih.gov/ResearchReports/Inhalants/Inhalants.html>

This information was adapted from the National Crime Prevention Council brochure, [Sniffing Your Life Away \(PDF\)](#) which can be found in the *Giving Youth a Voice* kit. You can order the teen kit at www.mcgruffstore.org.