



Inhalant Abuse Prevention

Quick Fact Sheet

Inhalant Abuse is Addictive and Dangerous

Inhaling the vapors from chemical products has become a dangerous practice among teenagers and young adults. Often referred to as “huffing,” inhaling chemical vapors can become addictive – leading to both short-term and long-term health consequences including death.

Most people have no idea how dangerous it is to inhale a chemical substance.

What are Inhalants?

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse of the National Institutes of Health, although other abused drugs can be inhaled, the term “inhalant” is reserved for a variety of substances including, but not limited to, solvents, gases and aerosols that can alter moods and create a high. Nitrites (poppers and snappers) can also be inhaled and are believed to create sexual stimulation and enhancement.

How Are Inhalants Abused?

People inhale chemical vapors through their nose, mouth or both. This includes sniffing, snorting or spraying the inhalant directly into the nose or mouth. Some people put the substance into a bag or other container and then inhaling from there or put the vapor onto a rag to inhale.

Inhalants can cause Medical and Psychological Problems

Inhalants are absorbed by parts of the brain and nervous system. They can slow down the body’s functions, similar to the effects of drinking alcohol. Other effects include:

Short-term

- ▶ Seizures
- ▶ Nosebleeds
- ▶ Loss of appetite
- ▶ Headaches
- ▶ Abdominal pain

Long-term

- ▶ Weight loss
- ▶ Sores on nose & mouth
- ▶ Impaired kidney
- ▶ Impaired liver
- ▶ Lung damage

How Prevalent is Inhalant Abuse in the United States?

- ▶ Over 2.6 million children aged 12-17 use an inhalant each year to get high.

- ▶ Inhalants tend to be a drug that is tried first by children.
- ▶ 59% of children are aware of friends huffing at age 12.
- ▶ 1 in 4 students in America has intentionally abused a common household product to get high by the time they reach the 8th grade.
- ▶ In Louisiana, according to the statewide Caring Communities Youth Survey, the reported inhalant usage (both lifetime and past 30-day usage) has decreased among 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th graders.

Louisiana Responds to Inhalant Abuse

House Concurrent Resolution No. 24 of the 2016 Regular Legislative Session urged the Louisiana Department of Health Office of Behavioral Health to raise awareness of addictive disorders involving abuse of inhalants and make efforts to reduce the prevalence of inhalant abuse.

Resources Available for Inhalant Abuse Prevention

Inhalant Abuse Prevention Kit

(For Parents)

www.consumered.org/teach/inhalant-abuse-prevention-kit

The Inhalant Abuse Quiz

(For Middle and High School Students)

www.consumered.org/teach/inhalant-abuse-quiz-and-lesson-plan

ACE and SADD Inhalant Abuse Prevention Facilitators Guide and Lesson Plan

(For Students Against Destructive Decisions Clubs)

www.consumered.org/teach/saddace-lesson-plans

Further Information and Sources

- ▶ *National Institute on Drug Abuse* - www.drugabuse.gov
- ▶ *The Picard Center* - picardcenter.louisiana.edu
- ▶ *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration* - www.samhsa.gov
- ▶ *Alliance for Consumer Education* - www.consumered.org