

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT INHALANT ABUSE?

One of the most important steps you can take is to talk with youth about not experimenting even a first time with inhalants. In addition, talk with teachers, guidance counselors and coaches.

Education should start at a young age. Inhalant abuse often begins in elementary school and can lead to further drug abuse, lifelong health problems or even death.

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

The Poison Help Hotline at the Tennessee Poison Center is available seven days a week by calling 1-800-222-1222. All calls are free of charge. Interpreters are available to help all non-English speaking callers.



## INHALANTS ARE POISONS



You may not know as much about the dangers of inhalant abuse as you do about the dangers of illegal drugs, tobacco and alcohol abuse.

This pamphlet provides a brief overview of inhalant abuse, but there is more to know. For additional information, visit these Web sites:

**WWW.TNPOISONCENTER.ORG**  
**WWW.INHALANTS.ORG.**

**FACT:**  
Tennessee ranks 7th in the United States for inhalant abuse.

**FACT:**  
By the eighth grade, one in five young people has used an inhalant to get high, at the risk of brain damage and death.



**ADAPTED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE TENNESSEE POISON CENTER, A PROGRAM OF VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER.**

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# **INHALANT ABUSE:** **IT'S DEADLY!**

## **Inhalant abuse can kill.**

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

Every year, young people die of inhalant abuse. Hundreds also suffer severe consequences, including permanent brain damage, loss of muscle control and destruction of the heart, blood, kidney, liver and bone marrow.

Today more than 1000 different products are commonly abused. The National Institute on Drug Abuse reported that one in five American teenagers have used inhalants to get high.

Many youth say they begin sniffing when they're in grade school. They start because they feel those 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.

## **What is inhalant abuse?**

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

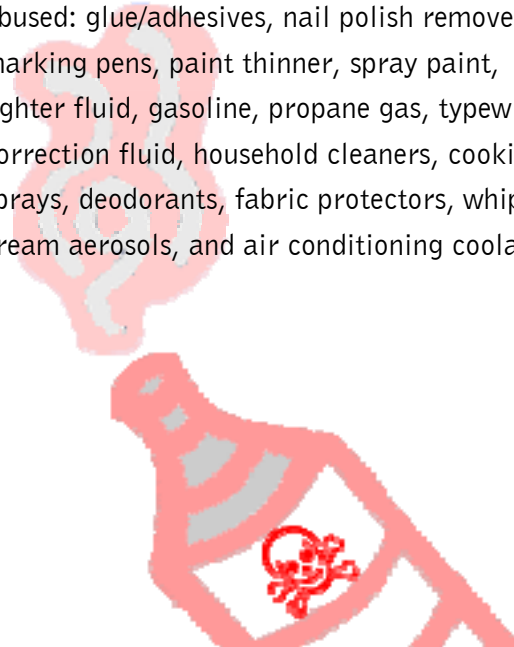
## **What are the effects of inhalant abuse?**

Sniffing can cause nausea, memory loss, blurred vision or death. Victims may lose control of their body, including the use of arms and legs.

Even worse, first time users may suffer permanent memory loss or may die suddenly. "Sudden Sniffing Death" can occur during or even right after sniffing. The heart begins to overwork, beating rapidly but unevenly, which can lead to cardiac arrest.

## **What products are abused?**

Ordinary household products, which can be safely used for legitimate purposes, are poisons in the hands of an inhalant abuser. The following categories of products are reportedly abused: glue/adhesives, nail polish remover, marking pens, paint thinner, spray paint, lighter fluid, gasoline, propane gas, typewriter correction fluid, household cleaners, cooking sprays, deodorants, fabric protectors, whipping cream aerosols, and air conditioning coolants.



## **How can you tell if someone is an inhalant abuser?**

If someone is an inhalant abuser, some or all of these symptoms may 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.

**POISON**  
**Help**  
**1-800-222-1222**

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