Are adolescents and young adults at risk?

Preteen adolescents are particularly at risk for abusing inhalants as they enter puberty, a time of rapid physical and emotional changes. Research shows that the earlier people start using drugs, the more likely they are to go on to experiment with other dangerous drugs. Inhalant abusers can become addicted to inhalants, withdraw from friends and family, and lose interest in schoolwork. Young inhalant users are at particular risk of dropping out beginning in the eighth grade.

How long do inhalants stay in the body?

Because inhalants are readily absorbed into many of the body's tissues and vital organs, the period of detoxification can take some time. Many of the adverse effects on vital body organs and mental health can be reversed with time and healing, but some users never return to their previous level of functioning.

Is it possible to become addicted?

Yes. Long-term regular users of inhalants may become addicted or dependent.

What is Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome?

It's frequently associated with sniffing model airplane cement, correction fluid, or spot removers, can occur when users inhale chemicals deeply, then engage in strenuous physical activity or become alarmed. SSD does not discriminate among casual users; it has been documented in first-time and chronic users. If you observe someone who appears to be having a sever reaction from inhalant use, dial "911" for emergency medical assistance immediately.

What can parents and communities do?

The good news is that children can be taught to resist social pressure to try drugs, like inhalants. What most people do not realize is that inhalants are among the most dangerous and prolific drugs that young people and adults can use. Fortunately, public education programs and prevention programs that build resiliency factors in youth can prevent inhalant use and experimentation. Parents can help by

becoming informed about inhalants, by talking to their children about inhalant use, and by keeping household chemicals out of the reach of children.

Who should I contact if someone close to me has a problem with Inhalants?

Contact the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse's toll-free hotline at 800.832.9623 or your local Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse for referral assistance. You may also contact your family physician, hospital, or yellow pages for other intervention and treatment options.

POLICE
PLANO TEXAS

Narcotics Tip Line

[972-941-STOP]

City of Plano Police Department
909 14th Street Plano Texas 75074
www.planopolice.org

FM601.254 REV 6/10

Inhalants

[Just the Facts]

Inhalant abuse is the deliberate inhaling or sniffing of common household products to obtain a "high." Many people do not think inhalants are poisonous drugs because these products were never intended for humans to inhale

Unfortunately, inhalant abuse is one of the silent epidemics that threatens to endanger children and adults who are not aware of the dangers of misusing household products. In Texas alone, 20 percent of seventh and eighth graders in 1996 reported ever using inhalants, compared to only 8 percent of adults 18 to 24.

Common Names:

Glue, Nail Polish Remover, Rubber Cement, Gasoline, Hairspray, Freon, Ether, Spray Shoe Polish, Paint Thinner, Lighter Fluid, Carburetor Cleaner, Paint, Propane, Deodorant, Nitrous Oxide, Laughing Gas, Air Freshener, Markers, Whippets, Octane Booster, Spot Remover, Bolt, Rush, Butane, Poppers

How are inhalants used?

Sniffed, snorted, and bagged (where inhalants are sprayed or spilled into a bag to concentrate the fumes). Users also "huff" chemicals by breathing through their mouths. Inhalant users can spray or dip chemicals onto a sock, rag, or toilet paper to breathe the fumes, breathe them directly from an easily concealed container, or pour the chemical in a plastic bag to be held over the head or nose. Many inhalant users also abuse a variety of other substances, like alcohol, which greatly increases the chances of adverse reactions.

What are inhalants?

Volatile solvents constitute the most prolific group of the three classes of inhalant abuse substances with. **Volatile Solvents:** correction fluid, paint glue, rubber cement, spray shoe polish, carburetor cleaners, paint thinner, nail polish remover, lighter fluid, gasoline, and hairspray. **Gasses:** ether, chloroform, helium, freon (refrigerant), whippets (nitrous oxide), and nitrous oxide (laughing gas). The propellant used in vegetable cooking spray and whipping cream spray is also inhaled.

Nitrites: amyl nitrite, butyl nitrite, locker room, rush, bolt climax, poppers, unlike other inhalants, nitrites are used on the night club scene. An estimated 1,000 inhalant substances are commonly misused.

Who typically uses inhalants?

Young preteens in the seventh and eighth grade tend to be the majority of inhalant users; however, some adults also have problems with inhalants. Adults can be exposed to, inhalants through their occupations, such as air conditioning technicians, dentists, and others who work with chemicals. Victims of inhalant abuse permeate all ethnic groups, genders, and all socioeconomic groups throughout the country. Inhalants are the drug of choice for some people because they are readily available, inexpensive, and easy to conceal. Individuals may use inhalants for euphoric effects, for fast and multiple "high," for the approval of peers, to reduce stress, or to rebel against authorities.

What are the immediate effects of inhalant use?

An intoxicating high very similar to alcohol intoxication caused by the inhalants depressant affects on the central nervous system. An inhalant "high" may last anywhere from 14-45 minutes, with effects lasting one to two hours.

What are the short term effects?

Inhalants can cause impaired judgment, decreased coordination, respiratory depression, coughing, nasal irritation, nosebleeds, nausea vomiting, loss of self control, low blood pressure, shallow breathing, increased or irregular heart beats, headaches, drowsiness, visual disturbances, and in some cases even death. Moreover, inhalant abuse can have profound effects on the mind, users may feel intense fear and anxiety, and may exhibit bizarre behavior resulting in violence for some and severe withdrawal, depression, and suicidal thoughts for others.

Signs of inhalant use

Paint or stains on the body or clothing. Spots, rash, or sores around the mouth and nose. Red, glassy, or watery eyes, dilated pupils and a runny nose. Chemical odor on the breath, on the clothing or in the room. Drunk, dazed, or dizzy appearance. Slurred speech and staggering gait, nausea and loss of appetite, anxiety, excitability and irritability. Seizures.

What are the long-term effects?

Chronic inhalant use can cause addiction, fatigue, weight loss, and dangerous nutritional imbalances. inhalants are poisons which are absorbed into vital organs where they cause long lasting damage. **Respiratory System:** Inhalants can cause damage to lung tissue when pressurized aerosols are inhaled or sprayed directly into the mouth or nose. Users are at great risk of asphyxiation or suffocation when they breathe concentrated fumes in plastic bags and do not inhale enough oxygen. Inhalants can also depress the central nervous system so much that breathing slows down or stops. **Brain Damage:** Long-term, heavy inhalant use is toxic to brain cells. Permanent damage can cause neurologic impairments, such as mood swings, hostility, confusion, depression, memory loss, and paranoia. Other physical losses include a loss of concentration, balance, and muscle control. **Vital Organs:** Prolonged heavy use of inhalants can permanently damage the liver, causing cirrhosis, and hepatitis. Inhalants can cause rapid and irregular heartbeats and even heart failure. Inhalants impair the kidneys, blood, and bone marrow, resulting in damage to the immune system.

Inhalants