

February/March
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POWER IN YOUTH



DANGER March is National Inhalant and Poisons Awareness Month

What are Inhalants? Inhalants are highly toxic substances that produce dangerous chemical vapors. Sniff, huff or inhale these chemicals and you can easily damage your brain—or shut it down forever.

The risks? DEATH CAN RESULT the first time or any time someone uses an inhalant. Inhalants produce effects similar to those of anesthesia. They slow the body down, produce a numbing feeling and can cause unconsciousness. Since the "high" feeling of inhalants lasts only a few minutes, people often use them over and over, which is extremely dangerous. Inhaling concentrated amounts of these chemicals can cause heart failure, suffocation, convulsions, seizures and coma. "Sudden sniffing death" can happen to a completely healthy young person from a single session of inhalant use, the first time or any time after.

Long-term effects Inhalants go through the lungs and into the bloodstream, and are quickly distributed to the brain and other organs in the body. Ongoing exposure to inhalants can lead to brain or nerve damage that produces results similar to that of multiple sclerosis. Inhalants can also do damage to the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys. Prolonged abuse can permanently affect thinking, movement, vision and hearing.

Info from <http://abovetheinfluence.com/facts/inhalants/>

Reality Check

If you suspect or know someone is abusing inhalants, discuss the risks and your concerns with him or her. Encourage him or her to talk to a parent, school staff member, doctor, or other trusted adult. There are also anonymous resources, such as the Treatment Referral Helpline (1-800-662-HELP) and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) (Lifeline's crisis counselors also handle calls about substance abuse, relationship and family problems, sexual orientation, getting over abuse, depression, mental and physical illness, and even loneliness.).

What to do When Someone is Huffing:



- Stay calm
- **If the person is unconscious or not breathing, call 911 immediately. CPR should be administered until help arrives.**
- If the person is conscious, keep him or her calm and in a well-ventilated area.
- Do not leave the person alone.
- Do not excite or argue with the abuser while they are under the influence. **Activity, excitement or stress may cause heart problems which may lead to "Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome". Stimulation may also cause violent behavior and/or hallucinations.**
- Check for clues, try to find out what was used as the inhalant so medical professionals can help more quickly.
- Inhalants aren't drugs, they're poisons. You may want to call the Poison Control Center, 1-800-222-1222 for advice.
- Follow up with professional help for the abuser. Call the Center for Prevention and Counseling at 973-383-4787 or seek help through a counselor, school nurse, or physician.

These tips are based on *What to do When Someone is Huffing*, © Synergies 1997, found on www.inhalants.org/whattodo.thm

Consequences You Become Addicted

When you use drugs, you put yourself at risk of becoming addicted. Some people have a higher risk of drug addiction than others, but it's hard to predict who will become addicted because there are many factors in play. Your biology, environment, and development all have a hand in determining your risk for addiction.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has done extensive studies on how drugs impact the brain, and this is what the science tells us: Although people of any age can become addicted to drugs, the earlier drug use begins, the more likely it is to progress to more serious abuse.

The teen brain is undergoing many critical changes. Using illegal drugs or abusing substances such as alcohol, inhalants, prescription drugs, or over the counter medications can interfere with development and lead to long-term changes in the brain, putting you at risk of becoming addicted. And if you've heard that marijuana is not addictive, think again. Research shows that each year more teens enter treatment with a primary diagnosis of marijuana dependence than for all other illicit drugs combined.

Drug addiction is a chronic, relapsing disease that affects the brain and causes compulsive drug-seeking and use despite harmful consequences. Although the initial decision to take drugs may be voluntary, over time, the changes in your brain can weaken your self-control and ability to make sound decisions, while sending intense impulses to take drugs. If you think you may be addicted to drugs, there are many treatment options available for young people—so get help right away.

Source: www.justthinktwice.com/consequences/you_become_addicted.html

HELP For more information on giving or getting help, call the Center for Prevention and Counseling, 973-383-4787.

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