

# TIPS for TEENS

## INHALANTS

### THE TRUTH ABOUT INHALANTS

GLUEY/HUFF/  
LAUGHING GAS/SNAPPERS/  
BOLD<sup>6,7</sup>

## GET THE FACTS

**INHALANTS AFFECT YOUR BRAIN.** Inhalants are gases or fumes from everyday products that are inhaled or sniffed to cause an immediate high. Inhalants cut off oxygen to the brain and can damage your ability to think clearly, cause you to become clumsy, and harm your eyesight. Some of this damage can be permanent.<sup>8</sup>

**INHALANTS AFFECT YOUR HEART.** Inhalants starve the body of oxygen and force the heart to beat rapidly and irregularly. Your heart may even stop pumping blood.<sup>9</sup>

**INHALANTS AFFECT OTHER PARTS OF YOUR BODY.** People who use inhalants often experience nausea and vomiting. Continued use of inhalants can lead to loss of hearing; damage to the sense of smell; loss of muscle control; and increased risk of cancer, as well as liver, lung, and kidney problems.<sup>10,11</sup>

**INHALANTS CAN CAUSE SUDDEN DEATH.** Inhalants can kill you instantly. Immediate heart failure and death, known as "sudden sniffing death," happens when the heart stops pumping blood. Inhalant users also can die by suffocating, choking on their vomit, or experiencing a seizure.<sup>12</sup> Using inhalants from an attached paper or plastic bag or in a closed area greatly increases the chances of suffocation and death.

## ? Q&A

**Q. SINCE INHALANTS ARE FOUND IN HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS, AREN'T THEY SAFE?**

**A. NO.** Even though household products such as spray paint, glue, and gasoline have legal and useful purposes, they are harmful and dangerous when used as inhalants. These products are not intended to be inhaled.<sup>1</sup>

**Q. DOESN'T IT TAKE MANY "HUFFS" BEFORE YOU'RE IN DANGER?**

**A. NO.** The first "huff" can kill you.<sup>2</sup> Or the 10th. Or the 100th. Every huff can be dangerous. Even if you have tried inhalants before without experiencing a problem, there's no way of knowing how your body will react the next time.<sup>3</sup>

**Q. CAN INHALANTS MAKE ME LOSE CONTROL?**

**A. YES.** Inhalants affect your brain and can cause you to feel less inhibited and less in control. You can become reckless, uncoordinated, and aggressive.<sup>4,5</sup>

Inhalants are dangerous and can be deadly. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at [teens.drugabuse.gov](https://teens.drugabuse.gov).

**SAMHSA**  
**1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)**  
(English and Español)

**TTY 1-800-487-4889**

[www.samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)  
[store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov)



**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration



# BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

Inhalants can kill you the very first time you use them.<sup>13</sup>

**2**

**STAY INFORMED.** Gases and fumes from chemicals in everyday products are dangerous when inhaled on purpose. Any method used to inhale these substances can kill you.<sup>14,15</sup>

Inhalants can be addictive. The effects last only a few minutes, creating an urge to sniff or inhale a substance over and over again. Inhalant users also can suffer from withdrawal.<sup>16,17</sup>

**4**

**KNOW THE RISKS.** Long-term inhalant users may permanently lose the ability to perform everyday functions such as walking and talking.<sup>18</sup>

The majority of teens aren't using inhalants. According to a 2015 national survey, less than 1 percent of teens (ages 12 to 17) were current users of inhalants.<sup>19</sup>



## MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS

## "TIPS for TEENS,"

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How can you tell if a friend is using inhalants? Sometimes it's tough to tell. Symptoms of inhalant use may include:<sup>20,21</sup>

- **Slurred speech**
- **Drunk, dizzy, or dazed appearance**
- **Unusual breath odor**
- **Chemical smell on clothing**
- **Paint stains on body or face**
- **Red eyes**
- **Runny nose**



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING INHALANTS?

### BE A FRIEND. SAVE A LIFE.

Encourage your friend to stop using or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Spanish, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:

**1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)**

or visit the SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at [findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

<sup>1,7,16,18</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). (n.d.). Drug facts: Inhalants. *NIDA for Teens*. Retrieved from <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/inhalants>

<sup>2,8,13</sup> NIDA. (2017). Drug facts: Inhalants. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/inhalants>

<sup>3,4,9,10,11,12,15,17,20</sup> NIDA. (2012). Research report series: Inhalants. (NIH Publication Number 12-3818). Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/inhalants>

<sup>5</sup> Howard, M. O., Perron, B. E., Vaughn, M. G., Bender, K. A., & Garland, E. (2010). Inhalant use, inhalant-use disorders, and antisocial behavior: Findings from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC). *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, *71*, 201-209. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20230717>

<sup>6,14,21</sup> U.S. Department of Justice & Drug Enforcement Administration. (2011). Drugs of abuse: A DEA resource guide. Retrieved from [https://www.dea.gov/pr/multimedia-library/publications/drug\\_of\\_abuse.pdf#page=78](https://www.dea.gov/pr/multimedia-library/publications/drug_of_abuse.pdf#page=78)

<sup>19</sup> Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2016). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. (HHS Publication No. SMA 16-4984, NSDUH Series H-51). Retrieved from <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-FFR1-2015/NSDUH-FFR1-2015/NSDUH-FFR1-2015.htm>