

Inhalants

AKA: all kinds of household goods, poppers, whippets, laughing gas, amyl nitrite, butyl nitrite, nitrous oxide, rush

What is it?

Inhalants are things people sniff for a head rush. Usually it's stuff that's meant for something else, like gases, glue or cleaning products.

What do inhalants do?

People who use inhalants get a quick, giddy head rush. They are cheap and or readily available making them an easy choice for those who use them. Users feel slightly stimulated and uninhibited, but within a minute or two, a major headache comes on (the first indication that this is a bad idea). Hallucinations and numb hands and feet are often part of the package. Suffocation and sudden death can occur even on the first time.

C'mon, you can die after only one time?

Yep. Sniffing highly concentrated amounts of the chemicals in solvents or aerosol sprays can directly induce heart failure and death. This is especially common from the abuse of fluorocarbons and butane-type gases. High concentrations of inhalants also cause death from suffocation by displacing oxygen in the lungs and then in the central nervous system so that breathing stops.

Accidents can also result. You could be all head-rushed out and fall down the stairs, or drive into the path of an oncoming car. (Last year, a carload of high school students in Pennsylvania died because they were huffing and driving.) Plus, there's the whole instant-heart-attack thing, no matter how healthy you are.

What about using inhalants over time?

Permanent damage includes:

- Hearing loss
- limb spasms
- Central nervous system or brain damage
- Bone marrow damage

Serious but potentially reversible effects include:

- Liver and kidney damage
- Blood oxygen depletion

Who does it?

Inhalants are one of the most popular drugs among students in all grades. Around 15% of teenagers have tried them at least once.

*See References