



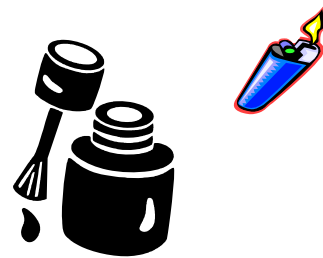
# Inhalant Abuse Fact Sheet

## What is inhalant abuse?

Inhalant abuse is intentionally inhaling a product to get high. Inhalant highs are the result of toxic chemicals getting into the brain tissue where they are capable of causing irreversible damage. Because the chemicals in inhalants enter the lungs in such high levels and go directly to the brain, they are more dangerous than other types of abused drugs.

## What are common signs of abuse?

- There is a common link between inhalant abuse and problems in school – failing grades, chronic absences and general apathy.
- Paint or stains on body, clothing, rags or bags.
- Spots or sores around the mouth.
- Nose is red or eyes are runny.
- Breath has a chemical odor.
- Person has drunk, dazed or dizzy appearance.
- Person has nausea or loss of appetite.
- Person is anxious, irritable or excitable.
- Missing household, school, commercial items that are known as being abused.



## What are the effects of inhalant abuse?



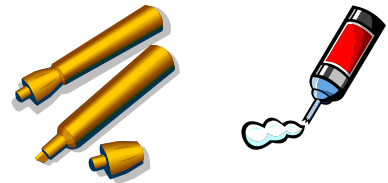
- Severe and permanent brain damage.
  - Death. Some die the first time they try it.
  - Loss of consciousness.
  - Irreversible damage to the liver, kidneys and bone marrow.
  - Chronic users may experience chromosome damage.
- Short-term memory loss.
  - Hearing loss.
  - Limb spasms.
  - Bone marrow damage.
  - Possible fetal effects similar to fetal alcohol syndrome.



## What substances are abused?

Common household products, school supplies & commercial products. There are at least 1,000 products being misused as inhalants. They include:

- Paint thinners and removers
- Dry-cleaning fluids
- Degreasers
- Gasoline
- Glues
- Correction fluids
- Felt-tip marker fluids
- Lighter fluids
- Spot removers
- Spray paints
- Deodorant and hair sprays
- Vegetable oil sprays for cooking
- Fabric protector spray
- Air freshener
- Asthma spray
- Computer cleaner
- Nitrous Oxide (laughing gas)
- Whipped cream dispensers
- Butane lighters
- Propane tanks
- Refrigerants
- Nitrates “Locker room, rush, or bolt”



## What to do if you walk in on someone inhaling?

- Remain calm and do not panic.
- DO NOT excite or argue with the abuser when they are under the influence.
- If person is unconscious or not breathing – call for help.
- Do not leave the person alone.
- Talk with others present or check the area for clues as to what was used.
- Call the Oklahoma Poison Control Center.
- Once recovered, seek professional help for the abuser from a school nurse, counselor, physician or health care worker.

## What are some helpful resources?

- The National Inhalant Prevention Coalition – 1-800-269-4237 or [www.inhalants.org](http://www.inhalants.org)
- The National Institute on Drug Abuse – 1-888-NIH-NIDA - 1-888-889-6432 or [www.drugabuse.gov/](http://www.drugabuse.gov/)

4/2005

**For other questions or for more information, please call the**  
**Oklahoma Poison Control Center**  
**1-800-222-1222**  
**OKC Area (405) 271-5454**  
**[www.oklahomapoison.org](http://www.oklahomapoison.org)**