

Inhalants

There is a wide range of everyday products which produce vapours. If inhaled they may cause a person to 'feel high'. Inhalants are depressant drugs that slow down the messages between the brain and the body.

Inhalants can be classified into four main groups

- **Volatile substances** are liquids or semi-solids, such as glues, degreasers, petrol, dry cleaning fluids, paint thinners, and correction fluid.
- **Aerosols** contain propellants and solvents and include spray paint, deodorants, hairspray, insect spray and vegetable oils.
- **Gases** can include medical anaesthetics such as nitrous oxide, and gases from products such as refrigerators and fire extinguishers
- **Nitrites**, including amyl, butyl, and isobutyl nitrites or poppers.

Other names

Glue, gas, sniff, huff, chroming, poppers

The Effects

Low to Moderate Doses

Effects can include:

- An initial rush or high
- Feeling of wellbeing
- Lowered inhibitions
- Excitement, euphoria, giggling
- Agitation, unease, aggression
- Hallucinations, delusions
- Impaired judgement
- Drowsiness
- Runny nose, nosebleeds
- Blurred vision, Slurred speech
- Nausea and vomiting
- Chest pain

Higher doses

Effects can include:

- Disorientation
- Decreased coordination
- Visual distortions
- Nausea, vomiting
- Headaches
- Hallucinations
- Blackouts, convulsions, coma
- Sudden sniffing death

Long Term Effects

Most long term effects of using inhalants are not permanent. However, inhaling aerosols, petrol and cleaning materials can cause permanent brain damage.

Using inhalants long term can cause:

- Pale appearance
- Weight loss, excessive thirst
- Tiredness
- Tremors
- Loss of sense of smell and hearing
- Forgetfulness, memory impairment
- Reduced attention and ability to think logically and clearly
- Liver and kidney damage
- Irritability, hostility, depression
- Chest pain, Stomach ulcers

Coming down

When the effects wear off you may experience the following symptoms which could last for several days:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Drowsiness
- Numbness

Legal Issues

In some states and territories, it is illegal for shopkeepers to sell certain products if they believe they are to be used for inhaling. Some Australian states and territories have revised certain police powers in recent years so that police are now authorised to:

- take away inhalants and related equipment
- detain young people who are found to be using inhalants and place them in the care of a responsible person or safe place.