

Inhalants

What are Inhalants?

Inhalants are substances that some people **sniff** for their mood-altering effects.

Almost any **solvent** can be inhaled. They all evaporate easily, giving off **chemical fumes**.

Some people **squeeze glue into a bag** and breathe in the vapor. Others **pour solvents** onto a **cloth** and hold it over their faces. They can also **sniff** from a **container or gas tank**.

Sometimes you can tell solvent users by their smell and appearance. They may have an **unpleasant odor** on their breath and clothes, and **increased saliva** (drooling and spitting). They may have **facial rashes, chronic nosebleeds, nose and mouth sores, throat or ear infections, poor appetites, and low energy**.

Effects of Long Term Use

Using inhalants regularly for a long time can result in **memory loss, brain damage, personality changes, muscular weakness, fatigue, and nerve damage starting in the hands and feet**.

Inhalants and Addiction

People who use inhalants often find that they need more and more to get the same "high." Heavy users can become **addicted**. **Withdrawal** symptoms include being **irritable, restless, depressed, slow and tired**. They can get **aggressive**, or experience **chills, headaches, and hallucinations**.

Effects of Short Term Use

- When someone inhales a chemical, the linings of the mouth, nose, throat, and lungs quickly soak it up and pass it to the blood. The **effects are felt very quickly**. A brief "**high**" is followed by a period of **drowsiness** that can last for **one to two hours**.
- **With increasing doses, users may:**
 - lose inhibitions
 - feel exhilarated ("high")
 - get clumsy and slur speech
 - have trouble making decisions
 - get sleepy and move more slowly
 - experience ringing in the ears, dizziness and blurred vision
 - become nervous, upset and disoriented
 - have headaches and chest and stomach pains
 - feel nauseous and throw up
 - have weak muscles and difficulty speaking
 - behave disruptively or hallucinate (imagine things that aren't there)
 - have psychotic-like reactions to inhaling (e.g., injure themselves because they think they can fly or stop a train)
 - become aggressive and violent
 - permanently harm their liver, kidneys, eyes, bone marrow, heart, and blood vessels.
- Users sometimes pass out with their head in a plastic bag and **suffocate**. Solvents catch fire easily, so users risk **burns**.
- Because solvents are **depressants**, using them with other depressant drugs like alcohol or sleeping pills can be very harmful, or even fatal.