



Maryland Poison Center

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Poison

Prevention Press

November/December 2009

Volume 2, Issue 4

What Products Can Be Inhaled?

More than 1,400 common household items can be used to get high. These products can be found in the home, garage, office, school and local convenience store.

Many of the items will not arouse suspicion when a child goes into a store to buy the product. The following items are examples of products that can be inhaled.

- Computer keyboard cleaner
- Spray paint
- Hairspray
- Air freshener
- Nail polish remover
- Rubber cement
- Paint thinner
- Cigarette lighters
- Spot remover
- Cooking spray
- Spray whipped cream

Did you know that...

1 out of 5 school-aged children in America has intentionally abused a common household product to get high by the time they reach the eighth grade

Teen inhalant use remains steady at 11% for past year use, yet only 66% of teens report that "sniffing or huffing things to get high can kill you."

Inhalants: What Every Parent Should Know

Huffing. Bagging. Sniffing. Do you know what these terms mean? If you are a parent of a pre-teen, chances are your child does. These terms describe the ways inhalants are abused. Inhalant abuse is the deliberate inhalation of fumes, gases or vapors to get high. Inhalant abuse usually begins at the age of 10-12 years, but children as young as 6 years old have tried inhalants.

There are many reasons children choose to try inhalants. They are easily accessible. Hundreds of common household products can be inhaled. These are products that can be bought in any store. They are inexpensive and legal to obtain. Having the products does not arouse suspicions. No complex paraphernalia is needed to use inhalants. The high achieved from inhalants is quick. Users feel they have control over the high. Use can occur anywhere and some products are relatively easy to conceal.

Inhalant use can cause death the first time or any time a product is inhaled. Sudden sniffing death is usually due to the heart stopping. Death can also be caused by a lack of oxygen to the brain, choking on one's vomit, and fatal injuries like drowning or car crashes after using inhalants. Inhalants quickly go from the lungs to the bloodstream and on to the brain and other organs. In the short-term inhalants cause headaches, muscle weakness, mood swings, slurred speech, poor judgement, and hallucinations. In the long-term, inhalants can harm the liver, kidneys, brain and cause hearing loss.

Warning signs seen with inhalant use are a drunk, dazed or dizzy appearance. Red or runny eyes and nose, spots and sores around the mouth and nose, slurred speech, loss of appetite are additional warning signs. Behavior changes, problems in school, anger and restlessness can also be seen. Parents should be alert for large quantities of aerosol products in their child's room or missing household products. Fingernails painted with magic markers or white out should raise questions. Parents should be suspicious if their child is constantly smelling their clothing, sleeves or hair scrunchies. Gasoline or paint soaked rags in unusual places should be cause for alarm.

The first step in preventing inhalant abuse is to talk with your children. Most parents talk to their children about the dangers of cigarettes, alcohol and drugs like cocaine, heroin and marijuana. Include inhalants in this conversation. Do not be afraid that you will be giving them ideas. Most middle school children know about inhalants. However, they do not know they can die from just a single use. Parents should educate themselves. The National Inhalant Prevention Coalition (www.inhalants.org), Alliance for Consumer Education (www.inhalant.org), and Partnership for a Drug Free American (www.drugfree.org) have information for parents. If you think your child has a problem, contact your pediatrician right away. If your child is having symptoms from inhalant use, help from the Maryland Poison Center is a phone call away.

