

What Every Parent Should Know

About Inhalant Abuse

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- Inhalants are often the first drugs young children abuse.
- According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 6% of U.S. children have tried inhalants by fourth grade and 20% by eighth grade.
- Children who “huff” inhalants generally use available household products, ranging from cigarette lighters and liquid correction fluid to shoeshine and hair sprays.
- Inhalants are often a “gateway” to other drugs of abuse.
- There is evidence that inhalant abuse is addictive.
- The health effects of inhalants can be devastating: brain damage, kidney failure, cardiac arrest, and a range of potentially life-threatening conditions.
- Early identification and intervention can stop inhalant abuse before it causes these serious health consequences. Warning signs of inhalant abuse include:
 - Chemical odors on breath or clothing
 - Paint or other stains on face, hands or clothes
 - Hidden empty spray paint or solvent containers and chemical-soaked rags or clothing
 - Drunk or disoriented appearance
 - Slurred speech
 - Nausea
 - Loss of appetite
 - Inattentiveness, lack of coordination, irritability, depression
 - Marks or irritation around the mouth
 - Unexplained holes or burn marks in clothing.