



## The Truth About Inhalants

**Slang—Glue, Kick, Bang, Sniff, Huff, Poppers, Whippets, Texas Shoeshine**

### Get the Facts...

**Inhalants affect your brain.** Inhalants are substances or fumes from products such as glue or paint thinner that are sniffed or “huffed” to cause an immediate high. Because they affect your brain with much greater speed and force than many other substances, they can cause irreversible physical and mental damage before you know what’s happened.

**Inhalants affect your heart.** Inhalants starve the body of oxygen and force the heart to beat irregularly and more rapidly—that can be dangerous for your body.

### Inhalants damage other parts of your body.

People who use inhalants can experience nausea and nosebleeds; develop liver, lung, and kidney problems; and lose their sense of hearing or smell. Chronic use can lead to muscle wasting and reduced muscle tone and strength.

**Inhalants can cause sudden death.** Inhalants can kill you instantly. Inhalant users can die by suffocation, choking on their vomit, or having a heart attack.

### Before You Risk It...

**Get the facts.** Inhalants can kill you the very first time you use them.

**Stay informed.** Inhalants include a large group of chemicals that are found in such household products as aerosol sprays, cleaning fluids, glue, paint, paint thinner, gasoline, propane, nail polish remover, correction fluid, and marker pens. None of these are safe to inhale—they all can kill you.

**Be aware.** Chemicals like amyl nitrite and isobutyl nitrite (“poppers”) and nitrous oxide (“whippets”) are often sold at concerts and dance clubs. They can permanently damage your body and brain.

**Know the risks.** Chronic inhalant abusers may permanently lose the ability to perform everyday functions like walking, talking, and thinking.

**Look around you.** The vast majority of teens aren’t using inhalants. According to a 2006 study, only 1.3 percent of teens are regular inhalant users and 9 in 10 teens have never even tried inhalants.<sup>1</sup>

### Know the Signs...

#### How can you tell if a friend is using inhalants?

Sometimes it’s tough to tell. But there are signs you can look for. If your friend has one or more of the following warning signs, he or she may be using inhalants:

- Slurred speech
- Drunk, dizzy, or dazed appearance
- Unusual breath odor
- Chemical smell on clothing
- Paint stains on body or face
- Red eyes
- Runny nose

**What can you do to help someone who is using inhalants?** Be a real friend. Encourage your friend to seek professional help. For information and referrals, call SAMHSA’s Health Information Network at 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727).

**For more information or for references to facts found in this *Tips for Teens*, go to [www.samhsa.gov/SHIN](http://www.samhsa.gov/SHIN).**