

Also called volatile substances or solvents.

Inhalants are depressant drugs which means that they slow down and interfere with the functioning of the brain and the body. Using inhalants is commonly referred to as "sniffing", "huffing", "chroming", or "popping".

What do they look like?

- Glue, petrol, paint thinner (volatile solvents)
- Gases (nitrous oxide, butane, propane)
- Liquid (amyl nitrite, or butyl nitrite)
- Aerosols (paint, fly spray, deodorant)

How are they used?

- Inhaled

People use inhalants by sniffing the fumes often from a plastic bag or a container. It is important to know that there is no safe level of use. People should never use inhalants alone, or spray them directly into the mouth or nose as this can cause suffocation. Use of inhalants has been linked to sudden death from heart failure or asphyxiation.

What are the possible short-term effects?

People may use inhalants to induce feelings of euphoria, or to lower inhibitions. Other short-term effects include:

- Headaches
- Slurred speech
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Low blood pressure
- Decreased coordination
- Irregular heartbeat
- Visual distortions

Inhalants affect people differently depending on the type of inhalant used, whether it is used with other drugs, individual characteristics of people, availability of fresh air and physical activity before and after using the substance.

What are the possible long-term effects?

- Tremors
- Weight loss
- Loss of smell and hearing
- Pimples or blisters around the mouth
- Liver and kidney damage
- Chest pain
- Anaemia
- Irregular heartbeat
- Memory problems
- Brain damage
- Agitation
- Mood disturbances
- Depression
- Paranoia

What are the signs of an inhalant problem?

- Spending a great deal of time getting, using, or recovering from the effects
- Using in greater amounts, or for longer than originally planned
- Needing to use more to get the same effect
- Having cravings, difficulties stopping/reducing use
- Experiencing withdrawal symptoms
- Social problems including relationship issues, financial problems, impacts on study or work and legal problems

Thinking about cutting back or stopping?

Sometimes it can take a few attempts to cut back or stop.

- Focus on the reasons for cutting down or stopping
- Avoid 'triggers' (i.e. things associated with using such as places, people and stressful situations)
- Ask a friend, family member or health professional for support

Inhalants use and pregnancy

Using inhalants while pregnant or breastfeeding is linked to higher rates of miscarriage, birth defects, SIDS and other complications. People who are concerned about their inhalant use while pregnant or breastfeeding should talk to their doctor or health professional.

What help is available?

Adis 24/7 Alcohol and Drug Support is a 24 hour, 7 day a week confidential support service for people in Queensland with alcohol and other drug concerns, their loved ones and health professionals.

Talk to us. Anytime, anywhere.
1800 177 833

What should I do in an emergency?

If someone is experiencing chest pain, breathlessness, or blackouts when using inhalants, or if the person has collapsed or lost consciousness, call an ambulance on **triple zero (000)**. If they have stopped breathing commence CPR. If they are breathing normally, place them into the recovery position and continue to monitor them.

