

Overdose Risks

Because intoxication or “high” lasts only a few minutes, users try to prolong the high by continuing to inhale repeatedly over the course of several hours, which is a very dangerous practice. Users may suffer loss of consciousness and/or death.

“Sudden sniffing death” can result from a single session of inhalant use by an otherwise healthy young person.

Tips for Parents and Caregivers About Inhalants

Know the facts: Inhalants are not just harmful—they are deadly chemicals that can cause sudden death and lead to long-term substance abuse. Stay educated to protect your child.

Have open conversations: Proactively talk to your children and teens about the dangers of inhalants and substance abuse. Make sure to listen without judgment, fostering a safe space for them to share their concerns.

Be a role model: Set a clear example by being mindful of your own alcohol and substance use. Your behavior greatly influences your child’s choices.

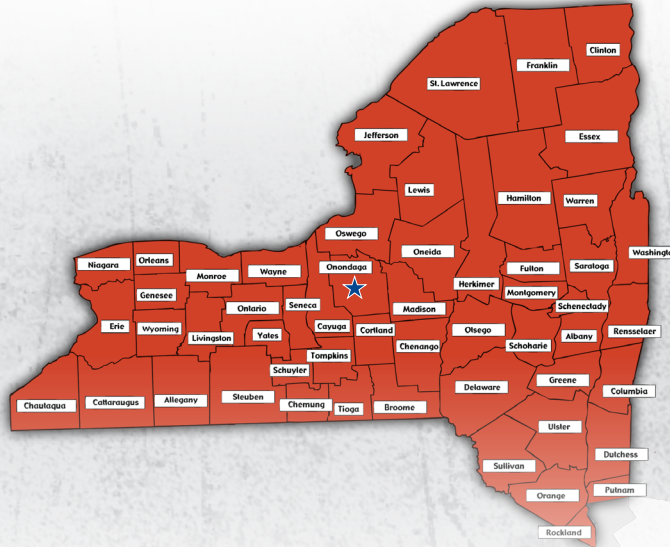
Stay involved at school: Understand your school’s policy on substance use. Engage with trusted school staff to address any concerns or signs of drug use, ensuring your child is in a safe environment.

Act early if concerned: If you suspect your child is experimenting with inhalants or any substances, don’t wait. Reach out to their pediatrician immediately for guidance and support.

Stay informed about online activity: Actively monitor the social media platforms and websites your child visits. These spaces can expose them to harmful information, including pressure or encouragement to engage in substance abuse.

UPSTATE NEW YORK POISON CENTER SERVICE AREA

1-800-222-1222



FAST. FREE. CONFIDENTIAL.

UPSTATE NEW YORK
POISON CENTER

UPSTATE
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

F81840 Rev. 11/2025 Review 11/2025

Inhalant Abuse

Information for Parents

UPSTATE NEW YORK
POISON CENTER



What is Inhalant Abuse?

Inhalant abuse is a form of substance abuse that involves breathing in or sniffing household products to “get high.” Almost any aerosol or liquid solvent can be used as an inhalant.

Teenagers are the most common abusers of inhalants. Inhalants are easy to get because most are legal, cheap, and accessible in the house. Teenagers often try inhalants before they try alcohol, cigarettes, or other drugs.

Slang Terms/Also Known As

Air blast, Ames, Amys, aroma of men, bolt, boppers, bullet, buzz bomb, chroming, dusters, hardware, heart-on, highball, huff, laughing gas, moon gas, pearls, poppers, rush snappers, snotballs, spray, Texas shoeshine, whippets, whiteout

- “Huffing” – fumes entering the mouth from an inhalant-soaked rag
- “Sniffing” – fumes entering the nose from inhaling substance placed near the nostril
- “Bagging” – sniffing or inhaling fumes from substances sprayed or deposited inside a plastic or paper bag
- “Spraying” – direct spraying into nose or back of mouth

Long term effects

- Permanent brain damage
- Slurred speech
- Lack of muscle coordination and balance
- Damage to heart, liver or other major organs
- Vision problems
- Hearing loss
- Death

Types of Inhalants

Liquids	Aerosols	Gases	Nitrites
			
Paint thinners Nail polish remover Dry-cleaning fluids Gasoline Glues & rubber cement Correction fluid Felt tip markers	Spray paint Deodorant Hair spray Cooking spray Ironing/Fabric spray	Chloroform Whipped cream Butane lighters Propane tanks Refrigerants	Leather cleaner Shoe polish Room deodorizers Food preservatives **Nitrites are prohibited by the Consumer Product Safety Commission but can still be found, sold in small bottles labeled as “video head cleaner,” “room odorizer,” “leather cleaner,” or “liquid aroma.”

Short Term Effects

Users experience a tingling sensation or a “high” which can last five seconds to two minutes. The effects can last longer.

These include:

- Irregular heartbeat
- Loss of consciousness
- Disorientation
- Memory loss
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Loss of coordination

Signs of Use/Abuse

- Paint is regularly found on the body or clothes
- Spots or sores around mouth
- Red or runny eyes or nose
- Chemical odor on breath
- Drunk or dazed look
- Loss of appetite
- Irritability or excitability
- Odd products in teen’s room/backpack
- Loss of personal interests
- Numerous empty cans/bottles in the garbage

Visit our website for more information: www.upstate.edu/poison



1-800-222-1222

Scan to save our number in your phone

