

# Inhalants


**Inhalants AKA solvents, glue, gas, sniff, sniffing, huff, chroming, poppers**

## What are they?

Inhalants are vapours or fumes breathed in through the nose or mouth.

Many everyday products have been used as inhalants, including glue, aerosol sprays, cleaning fluids, correction fluids, lighter gas, paints and petrol.

Inhalants are often inhaled by sniffing or 'snorting' fumes from containers, spraying aerosols directly into the mouth or nose, spraying or placing the product in a paper or plastic bag and then inhaling, by huffing from an inhalant-soaked rag, or inhaling from balloons filled with nitrous oxide. Using inhalants is even more dangerous when used in enclosed spaces, combining with other drugs or medications or mixing with physical activity such as running around.



**There is no safe way to use inhalants**



## What do they do?

How inhalants effect you depends on how much you inhale, what you have used before (and how much), whether you are using it on its own or mixed with something else, your size and the kind of mood you are in.

Inhalants often make you feel high, intoxicated or disoriented. They will slow down your coordination, judgement and

response times but they will not necessarily make you feel depressed.

Most inhalants slow down the body's functions. If large quantities are inhaled they can quickly cause intoxication, which usually lasts only a few minutes. Some of the effects include feeling dizzy and light-headed, feeling confident, excited and wanting to laugh.

Inhalants might give people a 'rush' but there are also some pretty unpleasant effects including:

Slurred speech and blurred vision	Feeling thirsty	Being unable to coordinate your movements and slowed reflexes
Dribbling, sneezing or coughing	Feeling tired after the initial high	Nausea (feeling sick and wanting to vomit), headaches and feeling 'hung over'
Nose bleeds	Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there)	Risky behaviour, including aggression and violence, accidents and injury, and unwanted sex.

Repeated use of inhalants can feel good at first but they can make you feel less inhibited and less in control.



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## Inhalants and your mental health

People often use inhalants to make them feel good but if you already have a mental health problem inhalants can make you feel much worse. Lots of people feel anxious, restless, irritable and suspicious when they use inhalants. In extreme cases you might also feel angrier and behave more violently than you would normally.



## Coming down from using

It is common to feel pretty bad after using. Some of the common things people experience includes headaches, nausea, feeling really tired and feeling vague or disconnected from what's going on around you.



## When someone overdoses

Inhaling too much or using a particularly strong inhalant can cause someone to overdose. This may lead to things like nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, chest pain, hallucinations, blackouts, seizures or loss of consciousness – it will look different depending on what's happening for the person (e.g. they may have mixed drugs or inhaled when they haven't eaten or slept for a few days).

If you are worried about someone overdosing you can:



**Call 000** – you won't get into trouble for asking for help



**Stay with them;** don't leave your friend alone



**Put your friend on their side if they are unconscious** or in case they vomit



**Keep an eye on their breathing.**

## Staying safe

There will always be the risk that bad things happen if you are going to use inhalants. You can reduce some of this risk by:



**Not mixing with other drugs or alcohol** – it can get out of control quickly.



**Only using with people you trust.** It's good if someone in your group isn't using to keep an eye on you. Keep an eye on your mates too.



**Calling an ambulance (000)** if things get bad.



If your inhalant use is starting to affect things that matter, like your mental health, wellbeing or your friendships, it can be a good idea to talk to someone about your options, such as different ways to reduce or stop your use. Whatever you decide, **headspace** can help.



**headspace**  
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

For more information, to find your nearest headspace centre or for online and telephone support, visit [headspace.org.au](https://www.headspace.org.au)