

Inhalant Abuse Prevention:

Key Messages for Adults

1. More than 1,000 everyday products, including cleaning, office, and art supplies, solvents, gases, and shop chemicals have the potential to be abused as inhalants. Gasoline, butane, propane, products dispensed in an aerosol can such as air freshener, computer air duster, WD40; solvent-based products such as nail polish and remover, white-out, glues, markers and paints can all be abused.
2. These products are safe when used as directed, but when vapors are concentrated and breathed in, they can become dangerous and deadly.
3. There is no safe level of inhalant use. Sniffing highly concentrated amounts of the chemicals in solvents or aerosol sprays can directly cause heart failure within minutes. This syndrome, known as “sudden sniffing death,” can result from a single session of inhalant use by an otherwise healthy young person.¹ Therefore, no use should be tolerated and any use should be followed up by a professional alcohol and drug assessment and education about the dangers of inhalant abuse.
4. Because they are readily available, inhalants are often among the first drugs that youth use.² They are typically abused more by younger than older teens.
5. Inhalants can cause permanent damage to the nervous system, lungs, liver, kidneys, and brain.
6. Approximately 8% of Maine middle school and high school students have tried inhaling gases or solvent vapors to get high.³
7. Because of all these reasons, inhalant abuse should be on your radar. Be alert for the signs of inhalant abuse: Suspicious use of products, chemical odors, rash around the mouth and nose, weight loss, paraphernalia (plastic bags, empty containers, and smelly rags).

¹ Source: NIDA Drug Facts: Inhalants (rev. Sept. 2012) <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/inhalants>

² Source: The NSDUH Report (March 18, 2014) www.oas.samhsa.gov

³ Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey 2013

Created by the **Maine Inhalant Abuse Prevention Work Group**

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For more information about inhalants please contact:

Maine Office of Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services
Information and Resource Center

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