Inhalants of Abuse or Volatile Substances

- Mind-altering inhaled fumes, vapors, gases
- Most often vapors of commercial non-drug products
- Doesn’t include medical use of inhaled products or drugs that are smoked

Inhalant Abuse

- Estimated 1 million current US users
- Most often used by those 12-17 yrs old
- About 20% of 8th graders have tried; in some areas up to 13% of 4th graders have used
- Often group use in young, more solitary use in adults
- Impossible to control access to these products

Main Groups

- Industrial/household solvents (e.g. thinners, removers, cleaning fluids, toluene, xylene, benzene)
- Art/office supply solvents & adhesives (e.g. in whiteout, markers, airplane glue, rubber cement, spray adhesive)
- Aerosol propellants (e.g. in spray paint, Scotchguard, hair spray, deodorant, air fresheners, cooking sprays)
- Household/commercial fuels (butane, propane, gas)
- Abused anesthetic gases (nitrous oxide, ether, chloroform)
- Abused volatile nitrites (amyl and butyl nitrite)

Modes of Delivery

- Sniffing fumes from the container
- Soaking cloth, cotton, or kleenex in the substance, then inhaling through the cloth ("huffing")
- Placing or spraying inhalant in bag and inhaling from the bag ("bagging")

Characteristics of Inhalants

- Most have an intoxicating, stupefying depressant action like alcohol (but inhaled)
- User can lose consciousness
- Rapid action (like smoking route) with short duration (30-60 min. unless re-administered)
- Most are toxic (never intended for intake) – both the psychoactive component as well as the other chemicals/particles inhaled
• Risks
  • “Sudden sniffing death syndrome” (death due to cardiac arrhythmia)
  • Accidental suffocation due to bags, motor impairment, displacement of oxygen; coating of lungs with product
  • Aspiration of vomit while impaired or unconscious
  • Accidental injuries; risk of combustion, fire
  • Hypoxia & toxins can cause brain and nerve damage
  • Heart, kidney, liver, lung damage
  • Some products are carcinogenic
  • “Fetal solvent syndrome” if inhalants abused during pregnancy; large increase in birth defects

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8LpFqVyx62o&mode=related&search=

• Warning Signs
  • Chemical odor on body, breath, clothes or in room
  • Red, glassy or watery eyes; nosebleeds
  • Inflamed nose, rash around nose or mouth or where bag may be held or taped to face
  • Marker or paint traces on face, hands, clothes
  • White powdery ring around mouth from inhaling glue
  • Coughing, sneezing, drooling, nausea
  • Inhalant supplies (bags, rags, paint cans, balloons, hankiechieves, toilet paper tubes, lighters)
  • Large increase in use of “art” or “school” supplies

• Nitrous Oxide (“laughing gas”)
  • mild anesthetic gas used in medicine and dentistry in a mixture with oxygen
  • propellant in whipped cream dispensers
  • used to increase combustion in auto racing
  • produces euphoria & dreamy intoxication but deprives body of oxygen
  • ether & other gases also abused