

Inhalant Addiction & Treatment

Inhalants produce effects similar to alcohol and are created from a diverse group of substances that include volatile solvents, gases and nitrites that are sniffed, snorted, huffed or bagged. The substances used are found in common household products such as glues, lighter fluid, cleaning fluids and paint products. Inhalant abuse is the deliberate inhaling or sniffing of these substances to get high. Inhalants are often one of the first drugs that an addict abuses, as they are easily accessed and cheap to acquire.

Street terms for inhalants:

Moon gas, Spray, Ames, Air blast, Bullet, Heart-on, Highball, Hippie crack, Huff, Laughing gas, Medusa, Poor man's pot, Quicksilver, Poppers, Snotballs, Whippets, Whiteout

Effects of Inhalants

Inhalants directly affect the central nervous system to produce psychoactive, mind-altering effects. The short term effects are similar to anesthetics and slow the body's function overall. Inhaling chemicals rapidly absorbs through the lungs and into the bloodstream, quickly distributing them to the brain and other organs. Within seconds of inhalation, the user experiences intoxication along with other effects similar to those produced by alcohol, including euphoria, dizziness, reduced coordination, hallucinations, delusions, lightheadedness. A single session of prolonged sniffing can cause irregular and rapid heart rhythms and lead to heart failure and death within minutes.

Lasting/Long-Term Effects

Chronic use of inhalants has been associated with a number of serious health problems, including sometimes irreversible damage to the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys. Glue and paint thinner sniffing can lead to kidney abnormalities, while sniffing the solvents toluene and trichloroethylene cause liver damage. Memory impairment, attention deficits, and diminished nonverbal-intelligence have also been linked with inhalant abuse. Deaths resulting from heart failure, asphyxiation, or aspiration have occurred.