

# Pointers For Parents

## What Parents Should Know About Children And Inhalants

(NAPSA)—According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), one of the most dangerous substances abused by children and teens may be found in your own home.

These toxic substances are inhalants—breathable chemical vapors that produce mind-altering effects.

Many people do not think of these products, such as spray paints, glues and cleaning fluids, as drugs because they were never meant to be used to achieve an intoxicating effect. Yet, young children and adolescents can easily obtain them and are among those most likely to abuse these extremely toxic substances.

Parents should monitor household products closely to prevent inhalation by children and teens. Inhalants fall into the following categories:

### **Solvents**

- Industrial or household solvents or solvent-containing products, including paint thinners or removers, degreasers, dry-cleaning fluids, gasoline and glue

- Art or office supply solvents, including correction fluids, felt tip marker fluid and electronic contact cleaners

### **Gases**

- Gases used in household or



### **Sniffing correction fluid can stop your heart.**

commercial products, including butane lighters and propane tanks, whipped cream aerosols or dispensers (whippets) and refrigerator gases

- Household aerosol propellants and associated solvents in items such as spray paints, hair or deodorant sprays and fabric protector sprays

### **Nitrites**

- Organic nitrites are commonly known as “poppers.” Most poppers contain either isobutyl nitrite or butyl nitrite. These are often sold in small brown bottles and labeled as “video head cleaner,” “room odorizer,” “leather cleaner,” or “liquid aroma.”

Although they differ in makeup, nearly all abused inhalants produce short-term effects similar to anesthetics, which act to slow down the body's functions.

When inhaled in sufficient concentrations via the nose or mouth, inhalants can cause intoxicating effects that usually last only a few minutes.

Sometimes, however, users extend this effect for several hours by breathing in the inhalants repeatedly. Initially, users may feel slightly stimulated. Successive inhalations make them feel less inhibited and less in control. If use continues, users can lose consciousness.

Sniffing highly concentrated amounts of the chemicals in solvents or aerosol sprays can directly induce heart failure and death within minutes of a session of prolonged use. The syndrome, known as “sudden sniffing death,” can result from a single session of inhalant use by an otherwise healthy young person.

For more information about preventing inhalant abuse, visit [www.inhalants.drugabuse.gov](http://www.inhalants.drugabuse.gov), a Web site created by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, a component of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.