

## Huffing, Sniffing, Dusting & Bagging

Inhalation is referred to as huffing, sniffing, dusting or bagging and generally occurs through the nose or mouth.

- Huffing is when a chemically soaked rag is held to the face or stuffed in the mouth and the substance is inhaled.
- Sniffing can be done directly from containers, plastic bags, clothing or rags saturated with a substance or from the product directly.
- With Bagging, substances are sprayed or deposited into a plastic or paper



bag and the vapors are inhaled. This method can result in suffocation because a bag is placed over the individual's head, cutting off the supply of oxygen.

Other methods used include placing inhalants on sleeves, collars, or other items of clothing that are sniffed over a period of time. Fumes are discharged into soda cans and inhaled from the can or balloons are filled with nitrous oxide and the vapors are inhaled. Heating volatile substances and inhaling the vapors emitted is another form of inhalation. All of these methods are potentially harmful or deadly. Experts estimate that there are several hundred deaths each year from Inhalant Abuse, although under-reporting is still a problem.

### **Dangers & Effects:**

Inhaled chemicals are rapidly absorbed through the lungs into the bloodstream and quickly distributed to the brain and other organs. Within minutes, the user experiences intoxication, with symptoms similar to those produced by drinking alcohol. With Inhalants, however, intoxication lasts only a few minutes, so some users prolong the "high" by continuing to inhale repeatedly.

### Short-term effects of Inhaling include:

- headaches • muscle weakness • abdominal pain • severe mood swings • violent behavior • belligerence
- slurred speech • numbness • tingling of hands and feet • nausea • hearing loss • depressed reflexes •

stupor • loss of consciousness • limb spasms • fatigue • lack of coordination • apathy • impaired judgment • dizziness • lethargy • visual disturbances.

The Inhalant user will initially feel slightly stimulated and, after successive inhalations, will feel less inhibited and less in control. Hallucinations may occur and the user can lose consciousness. Worse, he or she, may even die. Please see Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome below.

Long-term Inhalant users generally suffer from:

weight loss, muscle weakness, disorientation, inattentiveness, lack of coordination, irritability and depression.

Different Inhalants produce different harmful effects, and regular abuse of these substances can result in serious harm to vital organs. Serious, but potentially reversible, effects include liver and kidney damage. Harmful irreversible effects include: hearing loss, limb spasms, bone marrow and central nervous system (including brain) damage.

**Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome:**

Children and adults can die the first time, or any time, they try an Inhalant. This is known as Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome. While it can occur with many types of Inhalants, it is particularly associated with the abuse of air conditioning coolant, butane, propane, electronics and the chemicals in some aerosol products. Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome is usually associated with cardiac arrest. The Inhalant causes the heart to beat rapidly and erratically, resulting in cardiac arrest.