

! What is an inhalant?

Inhalants are substances that produce chemical vapours that are intoxicating when inhaled.

One common form is the propellant gases used in everyday hygiene products such as deodorants, dry shampoos and air fresheners. Intoxication is rapid and passes within five minutes.

Is sniffing dangerous for children?

Sniffing inhalants presents a risk of fatal acute toxicity that is unmatched by any other method of intoxication that children and youths commonly experiment with.

Inhalants are highly dangerous to both children and adults. Propellant gases affect the nerve cells in the brain and electrical signals in the heart. This leads to intoxication but can also cause cardiac arrest and death.

Death from inhalation is not linked to overdosing. Every time someone sniffs an inhalant they risk cardiac arrest, even if they are not particularly intoxicated.

Products such as dry shampoo or air freshener are not hazardous when used normally, as the concentration of propellant gases in the air is not as high as when inhaling directly.

Is inhalant abuse common among children?

Calls to Swedish Poisons Information Centre about inhalants have increased since 2020. Most of the calls concern children between 10 and 14 years of age. Despite this, it is not considered to be a widespread problem in Sweden.

Historically, inhalant abuse has been reported as local outbreaks in which people sniff in groups. There have also been instances of it trending on social media. Most people do not know how dangerous it is.

There are many words in use to describe inhalant abuse. For example:

Sniffing

Glejda

Chroming

Inhaling

Huffing



Signs that a child is abusing inhalants

While sniffing inhalants has a similar effect to being drunk, intoxication is much shorter - typically no more than five minutes.

This can make it difficult to detect that a child is abusing inhalants. It is often discovered because children leave behind a large number of empty aerosol cans and plastic bags with spray residue in wastepaper baskets, toilets or other spaces. One of the children may even tell someone what they have been up to.

If you do find someone sniffing inhalants, it is important to deal with the situation calmly, as fear and stress increase the risk of cardiac arrest. The heart is particularly sensitive to the body's own stress hormones immediately after sniffing.

What should you do when it happens?

There is clearly a risk that greater attention on inhalants may give more people the idea to try them. It is therefore by no means certain that working preventively with children is a good idea. That said, it is absolutely vital that, as an adult, you know how dangerous they are and that you react immediately if you suspect that a child you know is abusing inhalants.

The first thing you should do is find out who is sniffing and aim your intervention.

Barnen som boffar måste få information om riskerna och få veta att man löper risk att dö varje gång man berusar sig på det här sättet.

Always contact the Swedish Poisons Information Centre for advice if someone has sniffed an inhalant.

If someone has sniffed an inhalant recently, they should be taken to hospital for observation. If someone who has sniffed an inhalant faints, becomes lethargic or has difficulty breathing, call the emergency number 112 immediately.

Learn more about the risks associated with inhalant abuse at giftinformation.se

**If you are worried about your child or have any questions, contact the Swedish Poisons Information Centre:
+46 (0)10 456 67 00**

In case of emergency, always call 112



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**Vital information
about inhalant abuse
among children.**