

Volatile Substances

Inhaling glues, gases, solvents, and aerosols can have serious effects on your health.

Solvent use is when the volatile chemicals in everyday products like aerosols are inhaled for the purpose of getting high.

Solvent use can lead to a psychological (but not physical) addiction.

Health risks include:

- Death from a form of heart failure known as 'sudden sniffing death syndrome' (SSD). **There is no 'safe' way to inhale solvents that avoids this risk.**
- Death from choking on vomit, suffocation or asphyxiation (perhaps because they are choking or because they have a bag or mask over their nose and mouth).
- Aerosols are highly flammable, causing a particular risk of burns and explosions.
- Solvent use kills approximately 60 people every year.



How can you tell if someone is using?

Since the effects of using inhalants wear off within minutes, it can be difficult to identify if somebody is using them. Some signs to look out for when it comes to inhalant use include:

- Chemical odours on breath or clothing
- Wheezy cough
- Runny eyes/nose
- Reduced sleeping and eating
- Spots/sores or red puffy eyes
- Grey look
- Headaches/sickness
- Drunken behaviour but quick to sober up
- Unexplained bruises
- Unable to recall times of the day or activities undertaken that day
- Empty cans and/or lids from cans
- Aerosols with nozzle removed
- Products in unexpected places
- Items of clothing/towels/rags that look bleached
- Products going missing or running out quickly

What can you do?

If you think someone has been inhaling volatile substances, try to keep the situation as calm as possible. An adrenaline rush caused by physical activity or emotional stress can trigger an adverse reaction or death. Choose the right moment to have the conversation. Avoid scare tactics and provide facts. Volatile substances are found in many common household products, such as adhesives, aerosols and cleaning fluids. Remove Volatile substances from the house e.g. replacing aerosols with roll-ons.



Choices CTM

Tel: 0300 333 0000

Text: 07436 315344*

@choices_ctm

*Workers will respond within working hours: Mon- Fri 9am -5pm