

# Pointers For Parents

## Inhalants: A Deadly High

(NAPSA)—Experts claim up to 1,000 household products can be used as “inhalants”—airplane glue, rubber cement, paint thinner, nail polish remover, bleach, kerosene, felt tip markers, butane, gasoline, dry cleaning fluid, spot remover, vegetable cooking spray, and propane. And parents often don’t know about it.

Inhalants may be the first substance a child uses, before marijuana, tobacco or alcohol, often in late childhood or early adolescence. National studies suggest that inhalant abuse reaches its peak at some point during the seventh through ninth grades. The latest government study reports that 9.1 percent of 8th graders and 6.6 percent of 10th graders used inhalants in the past year (Monitoring the Future, 2001).

The biggest danger in using inhalants is that kids can die—the first time, the third time or the 100th time. “Sudden Sniffing Death” happens when inhalants disrupt heart rhythms and lead to cardiac arrest. Death can also result from suffocation or fatal injury from car crashes when driving while high. Inhalant use can cause damage to the heart, kidney, brain, liver and other organs.

Signs and symptoms of inhalant use include: chemical odors on breath or clothing; paint or other stains on face, hands, or clothes; drunk or disoriented appearance; slurred speech; inattentiveness, lack of coordination; hidden empty spray paint or solvent containers; and chemical-soaked rags or clothing.

What can parents do? Put household products in a safe place and clearly mark them “poison.” There are also simple, everyday



**Parents need to talk with their children often to help keep them off drugs—including inhalants.**

things you can do to keep your kids away from drugs:

- Be absolutely clear with your children that you don’t want them to use inhalants or other drugs. Don’t leave room for interpretation. Talk often—more than once or twice a year—about the dangers of drug and alcohol use.

- Don’t react in a way that will cut off further discussion. If your child says things that challenge or shock you, respond with a calm discussion of why people use drugs and whether doing so is worth the risk.

- Be involved in your child’s life. Always know where your children are and what they’re doing. Get to know your child’s friends and their parents. Find time to spend with your child each week.

For further information and a free copy of the brochure, “Keeping Your Kids Drug-Free: A How-To Guide for Parents and Caregivers” visit [www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com), the parent site of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign. These materials are also available by calling 1-800-788-2800 (ask for document number PHD884).