



Huffing

Parents and teens need to be aware of this dangerous activity called Huffing. Huffing, snorting, sniffing, and bagging are all terms used for a dangerous substance abuse problem using inhalants. Inhalants are household items that parents and kids would not expect to be dangerous. Items like glue, butane fluid, nail polish remover, cans of air freshener, or a can of whipped cream can be misused for inhalant abuse. These items can be purchased by anyone in your local convenience store. Because these items are not illegal, often youth do not realize the dangers that are involved with inhaling these common household items. According to the Partnership for a Drug-free America 2000 inhalant

research, 38% of parents admit they are not aware of the risk involved with inhalant abuse. One of the many dangers involved in inhalant abuse is that using it just one time can cause sudden death. You can use inhalants one time, ten, or one hundred times and never know what time will cause the lethal dose that could lead to death.



If huffing does not cause a sudden cardiac arrest, it can kill very quickly in other ways. Death from suffocation, choking from their own vomit, burns, and car accidents are just some examples of what can happen to a person if they abuse inhalants. If huffing does not kill a person, it can damage parts of the body and especially the brain. Chronic use of inhalants can lead to hearing loss, permanent heart, lung, kidney, and liver damage. Signs that someone has used inhalants are sudden memory loss, impaired concentration, nausea and loss of coordination.

A study by the National Institute on Drug Abuse in 2003 showed that approximately 9% of eighth graders admitted to sniffing inhalants in the last 12 months.

Parents need to start to talk to their children about the chemicals that are kept around their house. Parents should try not to scare their kids, but explain to them some of the dangers of the products that are kept around the house, especially in the refrigerator and under the kitchen sink. By the 3rd grade, parents should begin to talk with kids about some of the dangers of substance abuse and poisonous chemicals. All families should have established rules about inhalant abuse and other substance abuse issues. An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure any day.

If you need more information about inhalant abuse, please feel free to contact the Berrien County Health Department Prevention Services Program at 927-5622.



What products are Common inhalants?

There are several types of household products that can be used as inhalants. Following are the most common:

Gases (often Nitrous Oxide)

- Whipped cream dispensers
- Butane lighters
- Propane tanks
- Refrigerants

Volatile Solvents

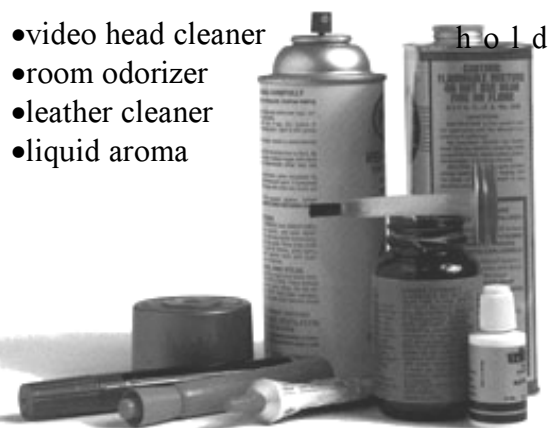
- Paint thinner
- Degreasers
- Gasoline
- Glue
- Correction fluid
- Felt-tipped markers

Aerosols

- Spray paint
- Deodorant/hair spray
- Cooking spray
- Fabric protector spray

Nitrites (now prohibited for any use but still may be sold as)

- video head cleaner
- room odorizer
- leather cleaner
- liquid aroma



Special thanks to Candy Briney for her help with this article!

The Berrien County Health Department has five locations to serve you:

Benton Harbor

769 Pipestone
P.O. Box 706
926-7121

M-139 Office

2106 S. M-139
927-5623

School Based

870 Colfax Ave
925-4500

Niles

1205 N. Front St.
684-2800

Three Oaks

21 N. Elm
756-2008

Or visit us on the web at www.berriencohlthdept.org

Berrien County Health

Department:
Preventing Disease,
Prolonging Life and
Protecting the
Health of the
Community.



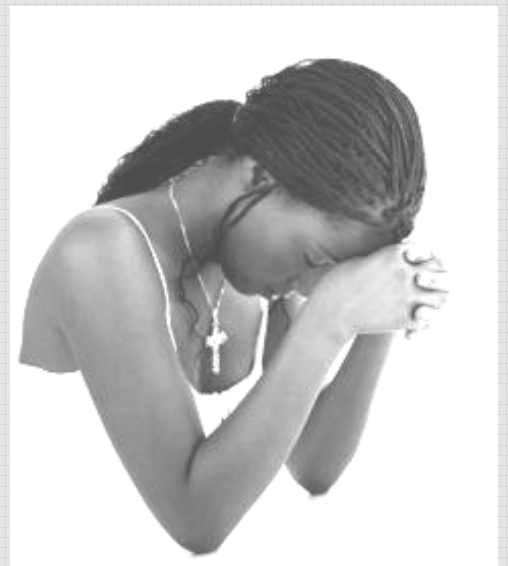
March is Reduce Your Risk Month!

March is Reduce Your Risk month, and the Health Department will bring your articles about reducing your risk of the following: Huffing, Diabetes, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and HIV. For questions about any of these topics, please call the health department at **926-7121**.

Huffing Warning Signs:

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the following signs could mean that your child is abusing inhalants:

- Chemical odor on breath or clothes
- Paint and other stains of face, hands, or clothes
- Hidden empty spray paint can or other solvent containers and chemical soaked rags or clothing
- Drunk or disoriented appearance
- Slurred speech
- Nausea or loss of appetite
- Inattentiveness, lack of coordination, irritability and depression



For more information about inhalants, contact Prevention Services at the Health Department at 927-5622.

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