



# #9961 INHALANTS EXPOSED

HUMAN RELATIONS MEDIA, 2000  
Grade Level: 6-12  
15 mins.  
1 Instructional Graphic Enclosed

## DESCRIPTION

Fourteen-year-old Anthony didn't die the first time he used an inhalant. He died the second time. What are inhalants? What happens to the body? What are the side effects? How long do side effects last? Are inhalants addictive? What are the signs of inhalant use? Provides the answers to these questions, along with more information on inhalant abuse, stressing that one-time use can kill.

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS

### Subject Area: Health

- Standard: Understands aspects of substance use and abuse
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows the short- and long-term consequences of the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (e.g., physical consequences such as shortness of breath, cirrhosis, lung cancer, emphysema; psychological consequences such as low self-esteem, paranoia, depression, apathy; social consequences such as crime, domestic violence, loss of friends) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 2, 3, and 4.)
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows influences that promote alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use (e.g., peer pressure, peer and adult modeling, advertising, overall availability, cost) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 3.)
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows ways to avoid, recognize, and respond to negative social influences and pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs (e.g., refusal skills, self-control) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 6.)
- Standard: Knows essential concepts and practices concerning injury prevention and safety
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows basic first aid procedures appropriate to common emergencies in home, school, and community (e.g., proper responses to breathing and choking problems, bleeding, shock, poisonings, minor burns; universal precautions to be taken when dealing with other people's blood) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 5.)
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows how refusal and negotiation skills can be used to enhance health (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 6.)
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows how to distinguish between helpful and harmful substances (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1.)

## INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To identify what inhalants are.
2. To explain the physical impact of inhalants upon the body, including death.
3. To identify reasons why people use inhalants.
4. To illustrate the signs of inhalant use.
5. To describe things people can do to help or stop others who are using inhalants.
6. To suggest that viewers decide now to say no to inhalants.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The aim of this program is to raise students' awareness of the dangers of inhalant abuse. However, the terrible truth about inhalants is that they are literally right under our noses. Any youngster can easily acquire a tube of modeling glue, a butane lighter, or any of dozens of abusable household products. Please be aware that there is the risk that some students might be tempted to use the information provided in the program and guide as a "road map" steering them toward experiments with inhalants rather than as a stop sign. As you plan your lesson on inhalant abuse, it is essential that you determine the degree of detail that you wish your class to receive. Naturally, your class discussions should be as specific as possible. Many of the activities in this guide allow you to explore the physical dangers of inhalants with your class without revealing specific details about brand names or how the products are abused. However, the age and maturity of your students should be considered when you determine what activities are appropriate for your students.

## VOCABULARY

- |                       |                  |                                 |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. addictive          | 8. hallucination | 15. side effects                |
| 2. aerosol can        | 9. high          | 16. sniffing                    |
| 3. brain damage       | 10. ignorance    | 17. sudden sniffing death (SSD) |
| 4. cardiac arrhythmia | 11. inhalant     | 18. suffocation                 |
| 5. chemicals          | 12. inhaling     | 19. tolerance                   |
| 6. coma               | 13. oxygen       | 20. withdrawal                  |
| 7. destroy            | 14. poison       |                                 |

## BEFORE SHOWING

1. Discuss drug use. List various drugs and their effects. Discuss why people do drugs.
2. Show cans of spray paint, gasoline, air freshener, and other common inhalants.
  - a. Discuss what the items are for normally.
  - b. Then discuss their use as inhalants. Talk about why young people use inhalants. List known side effects.
3. Copy and distribute the "Inhalants Exposed Graphic Organizer." Read over the headings. Explain that there will be time to fill in the information while watching the video or that it will be done as a review after viewing. (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHIC.)

## DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Consider pausing the video after presentation of information for the graphic organizer worksheet. Allow students time to record information. (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHIC.)
3. Stop the video after the question "Why would you inhale if you knew how dangerous it was?" (The tape says to stop for class discussion.) Discuss possible answers.



## AFTER SHOWING

### Discussion Items and Questions

1. Define *inhalants*. Name several different kinds of inhalants.
2. Discuss what the chemicals from inhalants do when they enter the body. How can the chemicals cause death?
3. What physical effects do inhalants have on the brain? What else can the inhalants cause? List the side effects.
4. Why is there a high rate of accidents, murders, and suicides with inhalant users?
5. Why is the damage from inhalants so serious?
6. What kinds of brain damage can inhalants cause? What happens to the lungs? To the muscle cells?
7. Why do people use inhalants?
8. Explain inhalant addiction and the issue of chemical tolerance. Describe the withdrawal from inhalants.
9. What can informed people do to help stop other people from using inhalants?
10. What are the signs of inhalant use? What should you do if you think someone is using inhalants?
11. If you find someone who is having trouble because of inhalants, what steps should you follow?
12. Tell Anthony's story.
13. What will you do if someone offers you an inhalant?

### Applications and Activities

1. Review the information from the video using the completed graphic organizer worksheet or watch the video again to complete the worksheet. (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHIC.)
2. Perform an experiment to simulate inhalant damage to the brain. Conduct the experiment in a well-ventilated area, or using a ventilation hood, or conduct the experiment outdoors.
  - a. You need a quart of toluene from a hardware store, a wedge of Styrofoam or styrene, a glass baking pan (8 x 8 x 2), a pair of rubber gloves, and a vapor mask.
  - b. Read the warning label on the toluene aloud.
  - c. Put on safety equipment explaining that you are protecting yourself from absorption through the skin and from vapors.

## C a p t i o n e d M e d i a P r o g r a m

- d. Pass around the Styrofoam. Explain that it represents the human brain. (For greater effect, cut it ahead of time into the shape of a brain.)
  - e. Discuss what will happen if the brain is put into the toluene. Remind students that sniffing chemicals dissolves fatty tissues in the brain.
  - f. Appoint a timekeeper to keep track of how long the experiment takes.
  - g. Make sure all students have a good view and that they are not downwind. Put the toluene in the glass container.
  - h. With the timekeeper ready, put the Styrofoam into the liquid. It should be fully dissolved in two minutes or less.
  - i. Explain that toluene—which is found in many glues, paints, thinners, and solvents—does exactly the same thing to a human brain.
3. Research a topic related to inhalants, and write a brief paper on the findings. Possible topics include:
- a. Trends in society. Research statistics on inhalant use by adolescents. Why are they a “gateway drug”? At what age are young people most at risk of experimenting with inhalants? How can we inform young people about the dangers of inhalants?
  - b. Sudden sniffing death syndrome. What is it? What are the statistics on SSD among 12- to 16-year-olds? Has anyone died locally from inhalant abuse?
  - c. Inhalants and the body. What happens inside the body when you use inhalants? How long do they stay in the body? Where are they stored? What damage can occur to the brain, liver, and heart? Can they cause cancer?
  - d. Inhalants and the mind. How do inhalants affect a user’s personality? Are the changes permanent or temporary? Find statistics on the incidence of murder or other violent crimes while under the influence of inhalants.
  - e. Getting help. Are inhalants addictive? Are they easy to quit? How can an abuser get help? What facilities are available in the local area?
  - f. Safe use of inhalant products. What kind of safety precautions or equipment is used by workers whose jobs include frequent use of inhalant products? Does your state have laws prohibiting the sale of inhalant products to minors?
4. Role-play scenarios involving inhalants. Use those below, or create your own.
- a. You go to a party. Someone you have a crush on asks if you want to go outside and get high. He shows you a hidden spray can. You explain that you don’t want to use inhalants, and he gives you a bad time about it.
  - b. Your friend huffs, then pulls pranks and thinks he is funny. You decide to talk to him because you know he doesn’t realize how dumb his actions are.
  - c. Your younger sister invites friends to your house while your parents are at work. You go into the kitchen and find your sister and her friends acting really weird. The room is filled with a chemical odor
  - d. You go to the mall and see the daughter of your parent’s friends. She has glassy eyes and is swaying. She has something shiny in her hand. When she sees you, she disappears into the mall crowd.
5. There is no law against possessing an inhalant product, but it is illegal to intentionally misuse any product for the purpose of getting high. Discuss or debate the following questions:

## C a p t i o n e d M e d i a P r o g r a m

- a. Should there be tighter restrictions on the sale of certain products to minors?
  - b. Should there be a law that requires workers who use inhalant products on a daily basis to take extra precautions when they use these substances in public?
  - c. Should certain industries (such as paint manufacturers) be required to create a new line of products that do not contain harmful inhalants?
  - d. Should the police be allowed to search a vehicle in which the driver appears “high” on an inhalant product?
  - e. Are there any other laws that should be created in order to keep inhalants from being abused?
6. Individually, make a list of ten ways to have fun without using drugs. Compare the list with classmates’ lists.
  7. Practice thinking quickly to respond to various situations. Given a situation below, take only 60 seconds to write a response. What would you do if . . .
    - a. An adult in your house got hurt and needed a doctor?
    - b. Someone asked you to drink or sniff something for fun?
    - c. Someone you didn’t know phoned your house and asked you for your address?
    - d. Your friends were sniffing inhalants in your parents’ garage and a fire started?
    - e. A friend was very sick from sniffing an inhalant, but he or she didn’t want you to tell anyone?
  8. Write or role-play various ways to refuse the offer of an inhalant. Practice giving a reason, changing the subject, giving a compliment, suggesting doing something else, or using humor.
  9. Create a poster to warn of the dangers of inhalants.
  10. Write a letter to a friend (a real person or an imaginary one) who you believe is abusing inhalants and needs to get help.
  11. Develop a survey to find out how much students in the school know about inhalants. Survey kids in the school. Tally all the responses. Publicize the results.

### SUMMARY

This program addresses a dangerous and often tragic practice among young people—sniffing fumes of household products to get high. This video presents facts and authentic stories about the terrible consequences of “huffing.” Students will hear first-hand accounts of how young people suffered seizures, blindness, respiratory arrest, and death from inhaling substances, such as cleaning fluid and air freshener.

### CMP RELATED RESOURCES

- [Inhalant Abuse: Kids in Danger, Adults in the Dark #2668](#)
- [No Big Deal #2674](#)



## World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and “kid safe” sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **DRUG FREE AZ: INHALANT FACTS**

<http://www.drugfreeaz.com/drug/inhalants.html>

In question and answer format, this introductory page provides a definition, slang names, and types of inhalants. More detailed information is located on the right of the page under “Inhalant Resources” and includes news reports; tips for teens, parents, and teachers; and warning signs.



- **INHALANTS–FACTSHEET**

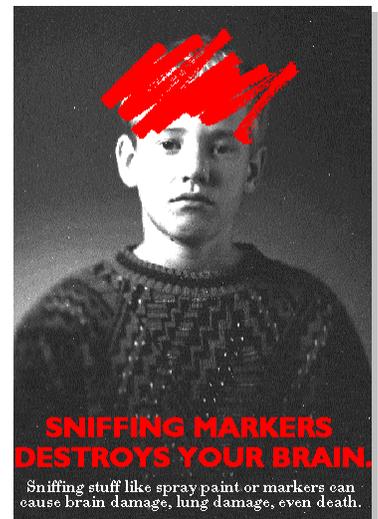
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/factsht/inhalants/index.html>

Sponsored by the Office of National Drug Control Policy, this Web page gives comprehensive background information, prevalence estimates, effect, long-term consequences, and more. There are several charts and tables of current statistics with those of a decade ago to show comparisons.

- **NATIONAL INHALANT PREVENTION COALITION**

<http://www.inhalants.org>

“Sniffing Correction Fluid Can Stop Your Heart,” so says the poster on the home page of this information source on inhalants. Click on “More About Inhalants” or read about the campaign to stop its use. Text has links to more detailed information. “Tips for Teachers” delineates what to teach about inhalants at specific ages.



## INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHIC

- INHALANTS EXPOSED GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

INHALANTS EXPOSED GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

What are inhalants? Anything that's a \_\_\_\_\_ to the body.

What is SSD? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other physical effects of inhalants:

Effects other than physical ones:

- **Suffocation** \_\_\_\_\_
- **B** \_\_\_\_\_
- **C** \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Side effects:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Lung cells can be:

\_\_\_\_\_

Muscle cell damage can cause:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Brain damage can lead to:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Why do people use inhalants?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Signs of inhalant use:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

On the back of this paper, write what you can do to help someone who is using inhalants.

Captioned Media Program