



National Inhalants & Poisons Awareness Week

Office of National Drug Control Policy March 2008

While overall drug use among young people has declined 24 percent since 2001, inhalants abuse remains a dangerous and potentially deadly behavior. National Inhalants & Poisons Awareness Week (March 16-23) highlights the importance of educating parents to substance abuse threats hidden in plain sight: everyday household products such as glue or shoe polish. When used properly, these products add value to our lives, however when abused, they have serious and damaging effects on the futures of our youth.

Inhalants Abuse Threatens the Youngest of Our Teen Population

The NSDUH (National Survey on Drug Use and Health) Report: Inhalant Use Across the Adolescent Years (SAMHSA 2008) has shown that about 1 million adolescents used inhalants in 2006.

- The 2006 Monitoring the Future study reported that more 8th graders have tried inhalants in their lifetime than any other illicit drug.
- While adolescents aged 12 to 17 accounted for only 8 percent of admissions to substance abuse treatment in 2006, they represented 48 percent of all admissions reporting inhalants. (The DASIS Report 2008).
- Combined data for 2002 to 2006 indicated that an annual average of 539,000 adolescents aged 12 to 17 had used inhalants for the first time in the year before their survey interview.

Inhalants Abuse Leads to More Illicit Drug Use

Studies indicate that while adolescents tend to use inhalants less as they grow older, they gravitate towards more illicit drugs. Parents are encouraged to monitor and reduce the accessibility to products that can be abused, not only for the dangers they impose themselves, but also for the springboard they provide to abuse of prescription and illicit "street" drugs.

Parents are Essential to Recognizing and Curbing Abuse

Data from the Partnership for a Drug-Free America (PDFA) data indicate that while parents believe their children are less likely to see great risk in inhalant abuse, inhalants are one of the least likely substances a parent will talk with their children about. (PATS, 2005)

Parents must be aware of the potential dangers posed by the abuse common household products, such as glue, shoe polish, spray paints, gasoline or lighter fluid, and nitrous oxide or whippets. We encourage parents to monitor and reduce the accessibility of such products for abuse.

Parents should be knowledgeable of the signs of inhalant abuse, which include: bad breath, face rashes, & stained clothing.

For more information about the signs and prevention inhalant abuse, visit: www.inhalants.org

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