



**McFARLAND RADAR**  
**(Relevant Alcohol & Drug**  
**Awareness Resources)**  
**COALITION**  
**AODA Prevention Newsletter**  
**OCTOBER 2023**

## Inhalants

Inhalants are various products that can be easily bought and found in the home or workplace (such as spray paints, markers, glues and cleaning fluids). These products can contain dangerous substances that have psychoactive properties when inhaled. People don't typically think of these products as drugs because they're not intended for getting high, but some people use them for that purpose. People who use inhalants breathe in the fumes either through sniffing, snorting, bagging, or huffing. It's called different names depending on the substance and equipment they use.



## Types of Inhalants

- **Volatile Solvents:** These are liquid inhalants that transform into gasses at room temperature. They include hair spray, paint thinner, nail polish removers, glues, dry-cleaning fluids (such as perchloroethylene), gasoline, correction fluid, and felt-tip coloring markers.
- **Aerosol Sprays:** This category includes substances sprayed from cans under pressure provided by chemical propellants. They include paints, hair sprays, deodorants, vegetable oils, and computer cleaning products. There is also "Dusters" with contain gasses such as difluoroethane which displaces oxygen in the lungs, removes carbon dioxide from the blood, and can cause hypoxia.
- **Gases:** This can include medical anesthetics as well as gases used in household or commercial products. Medical anesthetics include chloroform, halothane, and nitrous oxide (laughing gas). Nitrous oxide is the most abused of these gases and can be found in whipped cream dispensers and propellant canisters (often referred to as "whippets").
- **Nitrites:** This is a chemical compounds found in leather cleaner, liquid aroma and room deodorizers. They act directly on the central nervous system, dilate blood vessels and relax smooth muscles.

# Inhalants Side Effect

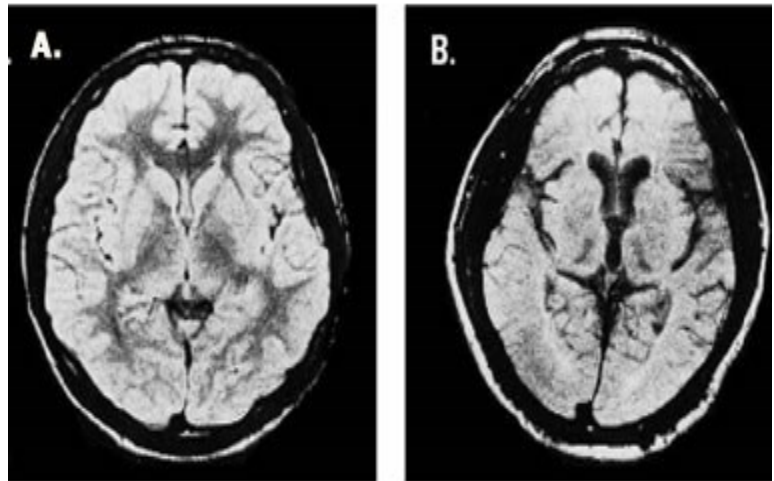
## The Brain

All inhalants reduce oxygen flow to the brain, in fact that lowered oxygen is largely responsible for much of the light-headed euphoric sensations associated with inhalant misuse, and without oxygen the brain cells can die. Additionally, the myelin sheaths, which is a sleeve of fatty tissue that protect the nerve cells in the brain, also can deteriorate, slowing the transmission of nerve impulses and thus breaking down the mental and physical ability to function.

In addition, long-term use can also lead to a lack of coordination, drowsiness, weight loss, muscle weakness, loss of consciousness, or even death.

## The Body

- A brief “high”
- Euphoric feeling
- Increased heart rate
- Distorted perceptions of colors, shapes, sound, time and movement
- Nausea and vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Hallucinations
- Blurry vision
- Loss of balance
- Delayed reactions
- Loss of control
- Sneezing and coughing



Brain scans

Compared with the brain of an individual with no history of inhalant abuse (A), that of a chronic toluene abuser (B) is smaller and fills less of the space inside the skull (the white outer circle in each image).

Courtesy of Neil Rosenberg, M.D., NIDA Research Report (NIH 05-3818).

## Youth and Inhalants

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, inhalants are among the most widely misused substances over the last decade, with nearly 700,000 youth between the ages of 12 and 17 using such products to get a euphoric high. Youth tend to use inhalants over alcohol because inhalants give a similar effect that alcohol does and it is easier to



obtain. For parents, one of the most important steps that can be taken is to talk with youth or others about not experimenting even a first time with inhalants. By discussing this problem openly and stressing the consequences of inhalant misuse, parents can help prevent a tragedy.

# Cold Medication

Over the counter (OTC) cough and cold medicine are safe and effective when they are used as directed but taking too much of them, whether on purpose or on accident, can make someone feel high and may lead to misuse.

Two commonly misused cough and cold medicines are:

- Dextromethorphan (DXM) which is a cough suppressant that is found in many OTC cold medicines. The most common sources of abused DXM are “extra-strength” cough medicines (Robitussin, Coricidin, Mucinex and so on). DXM is an opioid without effects on pain reduction, and when taken in larger doses it causes a depressant and sometime hallucinogenic effect that is similar to PCP and Ketamine.
- Promethazine-codeine cough syrup is a medication that contains codeine, which is an opioid that acts as a cough suppressant and can also produce relaxation and euphoria when consumed at a high-than-prescribed dose. Because this medication contains codeine, a doctors prescription will be needed in order to obtain.



## Dextromethorphan (DXM) Effects

“Robo-Tripping” or taking DXM in large amounts can produce a euphoric/drunk feeling, sedation, detachment/dissociation and hallucination. People may also experience dizziness, feeling faint, nausea, stomach pain, restlessness, increased heart rate and fatigue. Long term effects of DXM are still being researched however it is believed that sustained, habitual use can result in, agitation, delusions, mood changes such as depression and mania, problems

with attention and memory consolidation and live damage.

## Promethazine-Codeine Cough Syrup Effects

High doses of Promethazine-Codeine Cough Syrup can cause a few harmful side effects including lowered blood pressure, lowered heart rate, and slowed breathing. Those effects of respiratory depression can lead to even higher risks including respiratory collapse, loss of consciousness, and cardiac arrest. Long term effect are quite different from DXM. They can include nighmares, insomnia, seizures, liver damage and pain when not using the drug.

# Teens and Cough Medication

A 2020 survey from the University of Michigan found that 3.7% of high school teens and 4.6% of middle school teens in the United States had misused cough medication to get high. Cough medication for teens is a lot easier to find compared to other party drugs. While those under 18 are not allowed to purchase cough medication, it is still a common item in the average household. In many cases cough medication is the first hallucinogenic substance teenagers have access to.



Additionally, teens have access to information on how to misuse cough medication. Many articles online explain how to “trip” on cough medication, as well as videos on TikTok.

## How Parents can help prevent Cold Medicine Misuse:

- Talk to children and teenagers:
  - Be clear that you do not want your teen taking medicine without your knowledge.
  - Teach your teens and younger children to respect medicines. Medicines are important tools in healthcare, but they must be used according to directions.
  - Make sure your teen understands that abusing cough medicine—just as abusing illegal drugs— can be very dangerous.
- Safeguard medication cabinets. Take steps to protect teens by safeguarding all the medicines in the house. Make a note of what you have and how much, that way someone can catch if anything is missing. Discard any medicines that is no longer needed.
  - Local Police Stations have designated ‘drug drop off’ chutes to ensure that the medication is safely and securely taken care of.
- Educate yourself on the dangers of DXM and other cough medications as well as the slang terms that are often times used.
- Watch for warning signs of cold/cough medicine abuse such as loss of interest in activities or hobbies, empty cough and cold medication containers, declining grades, and medicinal smells.
- Speak Up at school meetings and community events to make sure other parents are aware of the dangers of this drug.



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| APPLECIDER | EERIE        | JINX     | SPELL        |
| BAT        | FALL         | LANTERN  | SPIDER       |
| BEE        | FRANKENSTEIN | MASK     | SPOOKY       |
| BLACKCAT   | FRIGHT       | MONSTER  | SUPERNATURAL |
| BONES      | GHOST        | MOON     | TENTHMONTH   |
| BOO        | GOBLIN       | MUMMY    | TRICKORTREAT |
| BROOM      | GRAVEYARD    | OCTOBER  | WEREWOLVES   |
| CANDYCORN  | HAUNTED      | OGRE     | WITCH        |
| CARVING    | HALLOWEEN    | POTIONS  | WITCHCRAFT   |
| COBWEBS    | HEX          | PUMPKIN  | VAMPIRE      |
| COFFIN     | HOCUSPOCUS   | PARTY    | ZOMBIES      |
| COSTUME    | HOLIDAY      | SCREAM   |              |
| CANDY      | JACKOLANTERN | SKELETON |              |



McFarland is a small community south of Madison in Dane County. In January of 2017, a group of concerned citizens came together to discuss substance abuse problems in the McFarland area. The McFarland RADAR is a result of these meetings



For time, day and place of meetings, please contact Cathy Kalina at [CathyK@fsmad.org](mailto:CathyK@fsmad.org)

**We are comprised of local representatives from schools, businesses, churches, village administration as well as parents, and youth—all working together to promote healthy lifestyles**

**For more information go to: <https://www.radarmc.com/>**

*The McFarland RADAR (RADAR stands for Relevant Alcohol & Drug Awareness Resources) Coalition works to develop, implement and support environmental strategies to reduce substance abuse.*

*We believe by working together, we can nurture social and environmental changes to make the McFarland area a safer and healthier place, brightening the future of our children, youth and families.*

**McFarland RADAR Mission Statement**

*“The mission of McFarland’s RADAR Coalition is to promote healthy lifestyles in the McFarland area through alcohol and drug abuse prevention and education efforts.”*

**HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

We are asking you to give the gift of time. Make a difference in the lives of our youth and our community by

1. Working with us in providing support for planning, project management and awareness campaigns
2. Helping with coalition events, conferences, workshops, and fairs held throughout the year.
3. Being a voice for change in our community, it is time to come together and be that force for change in the McFarland area.