

# An Issue of Influence...

## The Danger Lurking... In Your House

Did you know that some of the most readily available substances abused are in just about every room of your house? Substances called inhalants are fumes from common household substances that are sniffed or "huffed" to cause a high. Many are sprayed in a plastic bag or on a cloth or even into a pop can and inhaled in a closed environment. Inhalants are available everyday, accessible to anyone, their usage is hard to track and if used improperly can cause permanent damage or even kill an individual of any age at anytime.

### Who abuses inhalants?

Inhalants can be "the drug of choice" for any age, but the greater percentage of experimentation with inhalants occurs in middle school age individuals. By eighth grade, one in five youths has experimented with huffing at least once.

### The month of March showcases National Inhalants and Poisons Awareness.

Pairing inhalants with poisons is not a mistake. Inhalants are not truly drugs. The high obtained by an inhalant is actually the shut down of the brain to protect itself from the poisonous effects of a solvent or dangerous fume. Remembering chemistry from middle school, solvents by definition are liquid substances capable of dissolving other substances; "the solvent does not change its state in forming a solution". This means that the solute, or your brain, mucous membranes and lungs, among other things are the solute or substance dissolved in the solution.

### How do Inhalants effect your body?

Inhalants do not get processed through your digestive system like drugs and alcohol do. They affect your brain with great speed and force and keep oxygen from reaching your lungs. According to a past inhalant abuser, the

reaction of an inhalant on the brain is so powerful that inhibition to stop is bypassed immediately. The brain is shocked enough that the ability to evaluate risk is no longer present. Research shows that most inhalants are extremely toxic and can cause long-lasting damage to the brain and other parts of the nervous system. To prolong intoxication, users often huff many times in a row, until they pass out. This is a very dangerous practice and can be fatal. Chronic abuse of inhalants such as toluene has been shown to cause damages the protective layer around certain nerve fibers in the brain and nervous system, similar to that seen with multiple sclerosis. Inhalants also are highly toxic to other organs. Chronic exposure can produce significant damage to the heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys as well as muscle weakness.

### Some of the effects can be deadly.

"Sudden sniffing death" can happen at any time due to suffocation, choking, heart attack, or accident due to black out or seizure. Huffing does not kill based on level of fumes, how many times or how often someone inhales. Abusing inhalants is like playing Russian roulette, it kills at random.

### The consequences of abusing inhalants are not limited to physical health.

Depression is a common result of prolonged inhalant use. Someone who repeatedly uses inhalants may lose the ability to learn new things, may not recognize familiar things, or may have a hard time keeping track of simple conversations. Some of this inhalant-induced damage may be at least partially reversible when abuse is stopped, but damage caused by inhalant abuse can be irreversible.



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### Inside this issue:

*Warning Signs for Inhalant Abuse* 2

*What is Rock Sober?* 2

*Youth Activities Calendar* 2



The most frequently used types of inhalants are markers, glue, shoe polish, toluene; gasoline, lighter fluid; spray paints, and cooking spray - household products that are easily accessible to many youth.

For More Information

hubbardcountdrugfree.org

## What is Rock Sober?

Rock Sober is a group providing mentorship and support for youths ages 14-18 in the Hubbard County area. Rock Sober is about coming together to hang out, to talk about what is important in life and to have fun, with out having to use alcohol or drugs.

Our staff is comprised of area professionals and community members who volunteer their time, many of whom have struggled with addiction in the past.

Meetings and activities provide an atmosphere where teens can openly express their opinions and concerns while having an adult to help them work through those life's issues that may make them vulnerable to use alcohol or drugs. Adult facilitators provide a non-judgmental atmosphere where group members can relate their hopes and fears about growing up. Working through barriers and celebrating accomplishments is honored by rock totems symbolizing their developing character and course in becoming or staying drug



### Party on Main 2009

Sponsored by the Park Rapids Area  
Downtown Business Association

and alcohol free.

Group members are given opportunities to learn from other's personal stories, to receive information about the effects of using drugs and alcohol on their developing brains, participate in practicing the second thought so they are prepared for situations in which they might be vulnerable to use and to see how much fun they can have while not under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

For more information or to volunteer for Rock Sober in your community, log onto: [www.hubbardcountydrugfree.org](http://www.hubbardcountydrugfree.org) or call: Sara Bowles at 218-252-8275.

## Signs of Inhalant Use



### Watch for warning signs:

apparent drunkenness  
chemical odors from breath, clothing or child's room  
irritability, social withdrawal and depression  
loss of appetite  
nausea and vomiting  
red or runny nose  
sores and rashes around the mouth and nose  
paint stains on the hands, face and clothes  
hidden empty spray paint or solvent container,  
or rags soaked with chemicals.

Join your area  
Community Council for  
Youth Substance Abuse  
Prevention!

Laporte Area Meeting:  
The 2nd Tuesday of each  
month at 7-9 pm at the  
Laporte Baptist Church.

Park Rapids Area:  
The 2nd Wednesday of  
each month at 5-6:30 pm  
at Bella Caffe.  
Call 219-252-8275 for  
details or if you are inter-  
ested in the Akeley or  
Nevis area.

## Youth Event Calendar



Mondays at 5:30-7:00pm  
at the Laporte School in the  
FACS room.

Tuesdays at 4:00-5:30 pm  
at the HAPA/Taskforce office in  
the old Utke Hardware Building  
Starting May 18th, our Tuesday  
night group will be meeting in  
Rice Park at 3pm,  
weather permitting.  
Call 218-252-8275 for details.

### Alternative Highs

#### Laporte:

*Black Light Dodgeball*

*Starts May 1st!*

*Every Saturday from 6-9*

*At the Laporte Town Hall*

*Concerts to follow select nights  
during the summer.*

*Dates to be announced!*

#### Nevis:

*See the Events Calendar at  
[hubbardcountydrugfree.org](http://hubbardcountydrugfree.org)*

#### Park Rapids:

*See the Events Calendar at  
[hubbardcountydrugfree.org](http://hubbardcountydrugfree.org)*

## COMING SOON:

**End of Year Bash**

**on Main**

**Laporte Days**

**Youth Jam**

**Park Rapids Area  
Youth Art & Music  
Showcase**