

## Inhalants

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- The three main types of inhalants are volatile solvents and aerosols, volatile nitrites, and anesthetics.
- Inhalants are popular because they are quick acting, cheap, readily available at work and in the home, and problems with them are ignored.
- Volatile solvents and aerosols consist of hydrocarbon gases and liquids refined from oil, including gasoline, kerosene, airplane glue, nail polish remover, lighter fluid, carbon tetrachloride, and even embalming fluid.
- The effects of volatile solvents, mostly depressant effects, include dreaminess, dizziness, stupor, and slurred speech. Impulsiveness and irritability occasionally give way to hallucinations. Eventually, delirium, clumsiness, and impaired thinking occur.
- Prolonged use of volatile solvents, especially leaded gasoline, can cause brain, liver, kidney, bone marrow, and especially lung damage. Death can occur from respiratory arrest, asphyxiation, or cardiac irregularities.
- Volatile nitrites (“poppers”), such as butyl or isobutyl nitrite, are sold as Bolt, Rush, and Locker Room. The major effects are muscle relaxation, blood vessel dilation, and increased heart rate causing a blood rush to the head. Dizziness and giddiness also occur. Too much can lead to vomiting, shock, unconsciousness, and blood problems.
- Nitrous oxide, usually used as an anesthetic in the dentist’s office, produces a temporary giddiness that lasts for just a couple of minutes. If not done very carefully, inhaling directly from the tank can cause frozen and exploded lung tissue.

## Other Drugs

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## Sports and Drugs

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- Athletes use drugs to lessen pain, improve performance, socialize, increase confidence, and as a reward.
- Drug use among athletes dates from the time of the early Greeks. Drug use continues through the present because of increased availability of drugs, synthesis of new drugs, a “win at any cost” attitude, and increased financial incentives to succeed.
- Although use among collegiate and professional athletes is decreasing (possibly because of increased testing), use continues, especially among high school athletes.
- Three classes of drugs available to athletes are therapeutic drugs, performance- or appearance-enhancing drugs, and recreational drugs.
- A danger of various pain-killing drugs is that athletes will aggravate injuries while playing injured. Other undesirable effects of analgesics, such as opioids, include mood changes, nausea, and tissue dependence.
- The two kinds of anti-inflammatory drugs are NSAIDs and corticosteroids. Side effects of the latter are more serious than those of the former.
- Androgenic-anabolic steroids are derived from or imitate the male hormone testosterone. Athletes use them to increase weight, strength, muscle mass, and definition. Some use them to boost aggressiveness or confidence.
- The side effects of anabolic steroid abuse are acne, lowered sex drive, shrinking of testicles in men, breast reduction in women, bloated appearance, anger, and aggressiveness.
- Amphetamines, including meth-amphetamines, are used to boost the athlete’s confidence and to increase energy, alertness, aggressiveness, and reaction time. The negative effects from occasional use of amphetamines include irritability, restlessness, anxiety, and heart or blood pressure problems.
- Blood doping involves injecting extra blood into an athlete to increase the oxygen content of the blood. Because of the risk of infection, it is considered dangerous.
- Marijuana acts either as a stimulant or depressant and it is the most widely abused illegal drug. Athletes turn to marijuana to relax or calm down.
- Cocaine may be used by athletes for its stimulant effects and as a recreational drug.
- Drug use in sports risks loss of fan support. It imperils the notion of fair competition and it robs athletes who abuse drugs of a sense of self-worth and personal achievement.

## Miscellaneous Drugs

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- Other substances used to get high have included embalming fluid, gasoline, hairspray, C-4 explosive, and even camel dung.
- Smart drugs are a mixture of vitamins, powdered nutrients, and amino acids. Some prescription drugs used to treat diseases of aging, such as Parkinson’s disease or Alzheimer’s disease, are also used as smart drugs.