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## AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

### Cheap, easy-to-find household products put teens at risk

Common products found in the home can be abused by youths just like illegal drugs, leading to serious illness and sometimes death.

About one in four teenagers has tried inhaling or sniffing household products to get high quickly and easily. The products are called inhalants and include glue, gasoline, nail polish remover, cleaning fluid, paint, lighter fluid, the air from whipped cream cans and hairspray.

Because they are easy to find, inhalants are more popular among younger children. Six percent of eighth-graders have admitted to using inhalants, according to a recent survey of young people.

People might think the products are not as harmful as illegal drugs. But using them even once can cause problems with attention, memory and problem-solving; muscle weakness; tremors; and mood changes. They also can change a person's heart rate or oxygen in the body and lead to serious health problems and death. Children who abuse household products also are more likely to abuse or try other drugs.

Another household high is found in the bathroom cabinet. Prescription pills and patches that belong to other family members are commonly abused. They include leftover painkillers and patches (fentanyl, for example), sedatives, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) medication and muscle relaxants.

About 15% of 12th-graders admitted to using prescription drugs without a doctor's orders in 2012. Most of these teens got the prescription drugs for free from a friend or relative, according to the survey. Some have used fentanyl patches to overdose and commit suicide. The patches normally are used for people with chronic pain or cancer.

The American Academy of Pediatrics encourages parents to talk with children about the dangers of inhaling or abusing household products and prescription drugs. Certain situations make a person more at risk: lack of parental supervision, living in a family where substance abuse is accepted, living with physical or verbal abuse, certain mental health conditions, and the individual's personality.

Parents who suspect their child might be abusing household or prescription products should seek help right away from a professional abuse counselor.



— Trisha Koriath

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