

A close-up photograph of a child's mouth, showing the tongue and teeth. The child is wearing a blue and white striped shirt. The text is overlaid on the image.

1 child in 8 tries inhaling solvents

it can kill the very first time

BE AWARE. DON'T MISS THE SIGNS

BAMA 

Make sure your child is aware of the dangers

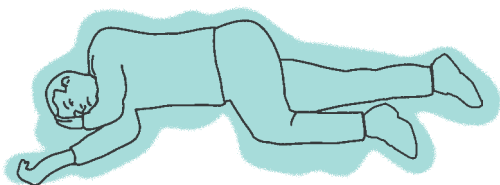
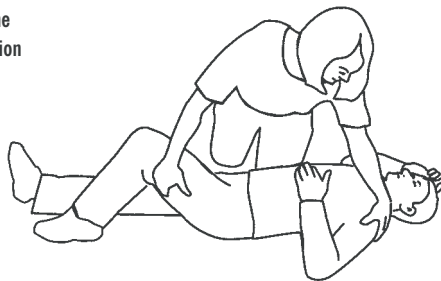
Most children, even those who are very young, have heard about sniffing even if you haven't, but they probably won't appreciate the dangers. Talk to your child about important issues, including drugs and solvents, and try to keep the lines of communication open. Know their friends and be aware of what is going on in their lives so you can spot any changes.

Set an example on the proper use of household products and encourage them to value their health.

Normal use of these products will not harm them, abuse may kill. And, if you are concerned that your child might still be tempted, keep an eye on the gas lighter fuels, glues and aerosols you have in your home and watch that they are not running out more quickly than usual. Petrol and Nitrous oxide (laughing gas) are a growing problem. You can get expert help and advice from the organisations shown on the back cover.



if necessary, use the person's knee to turn them onto their side in the recovery position



WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND SOMEONE SNIFFING?

If you do come across a child who has been abusing, don't chase, panic or upset them. Sudden stress or exertion can cause sudden death.

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If they are drowsy or unconscious:

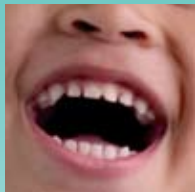
- call 999 immediately, even if they seem to be recovering, as it is better to be safe than sorry
- discourage exertion and keep them calm
- remove the substance and pass it on to the Paramedic so the product can be identified
- make sure there is plenty of fresh air
- make sure they are lying on their side (in the recovery position) so that they will not choke (see below left)
- administer C.P.R. (resuscitation) if needed

If they are not in such a bad way:

- stay calm and try to stop them sniffing without using force
- don't chase or over-excite them as this may cause sudden death
- realise they may be hallucinating (seeing or hearing things that are not there)
- do not choose to discuss their problem now
- stay with them until the effects have worn off

What is BAMA doing to help?

Aerosols are among many common household products which can be abused. The aerosol industry takes this very seriously and the British Aerosol Manufacturers' Association (BAMA) has been actively involved in work to prevent VSA for many years. We work closely with voluntary and government organisations and have sponsored a number of educational initiatives, publications, videos and teaching aids, and conferences for experts in the field. BAMA led on the voluntary "Solvent Abuse Can Kill Instantly" warning and this now features on almost all UK aerosol products. We have conducted groundbreaking research to investigate if aerosols can be made less abuseable, but still safe for normal users. The combined efforts of all those involved appear to have had an impact and the number of deaths has fallen from 3 a week in the early 1990s to around 1 a week now. This is a rare success in the prevention of drug abuse but we want to make sure the trend continues.



What can you do to help?

If you have friends or family who work with children through their job or as volunteers, please make sure they are aware of the dangers of solvent abuse as well.

For more copies of this free leaflet, please email: enquiries@bama.co.uk.



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Case histories

Gemma was outside screaming and pointing at the house. Then she fell and banged her head. A neighbour gave her resuscitation but she died in hospital. Gemma had inhaled butane from a deodorant. In her bedroom, the police found 5 cans of deodorant which felt empty. Gift set toiletries were also found with a space where a deodorant would have been. Her mother said: "My daughter had never been involved with aerosols; she was a good kid who was always in at the right time."

John suffered a fatal heart attack after sniffing a can of deodorant in his brother's bedroom. He was making sniffing noises and his brother Chris rushed in thinking he was taking drugs. He found John crouched on the floor with his eyes shut. Chris and their father attempted resuscitation but John was pronounced dead at hospital. His father said, "It's got to be brought home to children that sniffing deodorant cans is a stupid thing to do. You might as well put a gun to your head and play Russian Roulette. You only have to do it once and it can kill you."

More information

If you would like more information or support, you can contact any of the following organisations:



Talk to Frank, the National Drugs Helpline:
0800 776600, www.talktofrank.com

frank@talktofrank.com - provides free leaflets and confidential advice on VSA

Drugscope: 020 7928 1211,
www.drugscope.org.uk – provides information on all aspects of drug problems

Childline: 0800 1111 - the free 24-hour national helpline for children in trouble or danger

Re-Solv: a national charity dedicated to the prevention of VSA and provides advice and educational materials. Telephone: 01785 817885,
www.re-solv.org

Solve-It: provides support to young people, parents, guardians, carers and all those affected by volatile substance abuse, 24hr helpline: 01536 510010,
www.solveitonline.co.uk

Data on deaths from VSA: www.vsareport.org



**SOLVENT
ABUSE
CAN KILL
INSTANTLY**