



PRAIRIE RIDGE

PREVENTION SERVICES

National Inhalant Awareness Week
March 18-24, 2007

"CLEAN MIND; CLEAN BODY; CLEAN SPIRIT; DRUG FREE"

Newsletter

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Inhalant Abuse: Common among Preadolescents

By Rolena Hadwiger, MPH Prevention Manager

Inhalant abuse is relatively common among preadolescents. In the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) study annual survey 2005 (*Monitoring the Future Study*), 17.1% of 8th graders, 13.1% of 10th graders, and 11.4% of 12th graders said they had abused inhalants at least once. The highest rates of inhalant abuse have been recorded at some point between seventh and ninth grades.

Inhalants are "volatile substances that produce chemical vapors that can be inhaled to induce a psychoactive or mind-altering effect. In other words, inhalants are used to describe a variety of substances that are often inhaled in search of quick intoxication. These substances are common in everyday household products such as glue, nail polish remover, spray paints, cleaning fluid, etc... These are made easily available to our children. Many young people inhale vapors from these substances to get "high" without being aware of the serious health consequences it causes—breathing difficulty, heart palpitations, dizziness, headaches, damage to the brain, nerve cells, heart and lungs, suffocation and even death.

One of five students in America has used an inhalant to get high by the time he or she reaches the eighth grade.

--National Inhalant Prevention

According to the National Institutes of Health, inhalants are often one of the first drugs young children use. By the time students in America reach 8th grade, one of five students has used inhalants to get high according to the Iowa Statewide Poison Control Center. This youth drug has no social economic, ethnic, racial, or geographical boundaries. The national statistics shows that inhalant use among 8th graders increased from 7.7% in 2002 to 9.6% in 2004 is a higher rate compared to 10th and 12th graders (*Monitoring the Future Survey, 2004*). To bring it closer to home, 4% of our 6th graders in our area have first tried inhalants at age 12 or younger (*Iowa Youth Survey, 2005*). This only shows the importance of inhalant awareness campaign. Inhalant use will continue to creep to younger and younger children if we as a community ignore it.

The importance of early identification and intervention are the best way to stop inhalant abuse before it causes serious health consequences. Physical signs of inhalant use are unusual odors on clothing or on breath, spots and/or sores around the mouth, paint or other stains on face, hands, or clothes, slurred speech, inability to coordinate movements, nausea or loss of appetite, and drunk or disoriented appearance.

We can keep our youth away from inhalants by talking with them and letting them know the dangers of using inhalants. The very first use of inhalants can cause death. Most young users do not realize how dangerous inhalants can be. Take action and talk to your kids.



Pictures from NIDA

*If you know someone who Sniffs aerosol can, correction fluid, nail polish . . . to get high, they are inhaling poisons that do serious damage. **HELP THEM STOP.***

Contents:

- March Month Celebration**
- Inhalant Abuse: Common among Preadolescents**
- College Students and Alcohol**
- Questions & Answers**
- Upcoming Events**

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College Students and Alcohol

This spring, many parents and their students are going to visit colleges to determine which college is the best for their needs. Most parents have the image of their student college years as the time to expand one's horizons, make new friends, and make memories that will last a lifetime. For many students however, it has become a time of "excessive drinking and dealing with its aftermath—vandalism, violence, sexual aggression, and even death" (NIAAA).



Help Your College Student

- ❑ Inquire about campus alcohol policies
- ❑ Discuss negative consequences of underage drinking (date rape, violence, academic failure, etc.) with your student
- ❑ Meet and get to know their roommates
- ❑ Investigate living arrangements
- ❑ Keep in contact with your sons or daughters frequently.

One study of alcohol-related mortality and morbidity among U.S. college students aged 18 to 24 has indicated that an estimated 1,700 student deaths, 599,000 injuries, and 97,000 cases of sexual assault or date rape occurs each year.¹ Clearly, college drinking can be excessive, destructive, costly, and dangerous. The consequences of excessive drinking not only affect those who drink but also those who do not drink.

The transition to college is often difficult and parents have to remember that just because your youth is away from home, it does not mean that they don't need your guidance and support. In fact, the first 6 weeks of the first semester are the critical time to a first-year student's academic success (NIAAA).

References:

¹ Hingson, R. et al. Magnitude of Alcohol-Related Mortality and Morbidity Among U.S. College Students Ages 18-24: Changes from 1988 to 2001. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 26, 259-79: 2005.

² National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. NIAAA

Questions & Answers:

Question: *What do I do when I find out about drug or alcohol use by a teen who is not my child?*

Answer: *You should never underestimate your power as a non-parent role model. You can be a powerful positive influence for teens. In some cases, you could be the only person to whom the teen can turn. The first thing you can do is learn as much as you can. If guidelines exist in your organization regarding substance abuse, start there. Contact your substance abuse prevention or similar agency in your area to obtain information or ask for support.*

Once you feel comfortable about the information on drug or alcohol, talk with the teen. Remember, listening to what the teen is telling you is very important. Do not be judgmental. Remember, the goal is to get involved early before the use becomes abuse and could lead to addiction.

Question: *Do I tell the parents or caregivers? If so, how?*

Answer: *Depending on what you know about the parents or caregivers, it is important that you express your concern for the teen and explain the facts, as you know them. Suggest resources in the community where they can turn for help. You have to remember that sometimes some kids are introduced to drugs and alcohol by their parents. Regardless, you are there to help the teen rethink his or her choices and stop drug use before the consequences become severe.*

Remember to follow up. Stay involved with the process while they are looking for help to ensure that the teen receives the help he/she needs.

Question: *What can I do to keep my child away from drugs and other substances without pestering them?*

Answer: *First of all, kids might not like a parent keeping tabs on where they are and what they are doing. However, it comes with your job description as a parent to know what your children are doing; to ask who, what, when, and where. Teenagers do need their space but a parent should know what teenagers are doing. Setting limits with clear rules and consequences for breaking them in combination with being involved in your children's lives and acknowledging their strengths creates an environment that combines talking with action. Remember, youth credit their parents as a major factor in their decision for avoiding alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.*

March 17, 2007 *Diversion Program* in Prairie Ridge Mason City. The program will be from 8:30-5:30 p.m. Saturday.

For more information please contact the Prairie Ridge Mason City Office 1-866-429-2391.

March 27, 2007 *Community Prime for Life* in Northwood at United Methodist Church from 8:30 – 5:00 p.m. Please contact Kelly Grunhovid to register for the class 1-866-429-2391.

March 28, 2007 *Community Prime for Life* in Charles City at the ISU Extension from 8:30 – 5:00 p.m. Please contact Kelly Grunhovid to register for the class 1-866-429-2391.

April 16-19, 2007 *Adolescent Prime for Life* in Prairie Ridge Mason City. The program will be from 4:00-7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday day. For more information please contact our office.

For more information about any of the events, please contact us by phone or e-mail as shown below.