

(March 21, 2011) National Inhalants & Poisons Awareness Week

State Agency Encourages Parents to Discuss Dangers of 'Huffing' with Their Kids
(COLUMBUS – March 21, 2011) They're all over your house. They're in your child's school. Chances are you probably purchased some the last time you visited the grocery store. Educate yourself. Find out about inhalants before your children do.

That's the message the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) hopes to impart as it invites families and communities to join with the Cabinet-level state agency in observing "National Inhalants & Poisons Awareness Week" March 20-26.

"Many parents don't know that inhalants are as popular among middle school students as marijuana. Even fewer know the deadly effects the poisons in these products have on the brain and body when they are inhaled or huffed," said ODADAS Director Orman Hall. "It is never too early to teach your children about the dangers of inhalants."

According to national surveys, more than a million people used inhalants to get high just last year. By the time a student reaches the 8th grade, one in five will have used inhalants. In Ohio, 6 percent of students reported sniffing glue or inhaling aerosol products to get high in the past 30 days, according to the most recent statewide *Youth Risk Behavior Survey*.

Inhalants are ordinary household products such as glue, shoe polish, and aerosol sprays. These products are safe when used as intended, but they can be dangerous and even deadly when sniffed or "huffed" to get high. Nearly all abused products produce effects similar to anesthetics, which slow down the body's functioning. Depending upon level of dosage, the user can experience slight stimulation, euphoria, lowered inhibitions or loss of consciousness. In extreme cases, the user can also suffer from Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome.

"Experimenting with these substances is like playing Russian Roulette. A person can die the 1st, 10th or 100th time a product is misused as an inhalant," said Director Hall, adding that huffing can be a "gateway" to further substance abuse. In fact, 17.2 percent of adolescents who initiated illicit drug use during the past year indicated that inhalants were the first drug that they used, according to the *National Survey on Drug Use and Health*.

National Inhalants & Poisons Awareness Week (NIPAW) is an annual media-based, community-level program that takes place the third week in March. NIPAW is designed to increase understanding about the use and risks of inhalant involvement. It is an inclusive program that involves youth, schools, media, police departments, health organization, civics groups and more. It has proven to be an effective means of mobilizing communities to reduce inhalant use. To learn more, visit <http://www.inhalants.org/faqs.htm>.

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