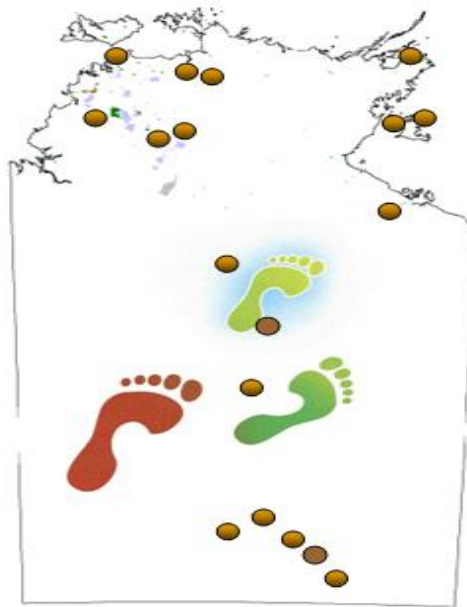


Remote Alcohol & Other Drugs Workforce Northern Territory

Volatile Substance Abuse



A NOTE OF WARNING.....

Unlike other drug and alcohol community education, research has shown that general education about volatile substances can have the opposite effect and may encourage experimentation.

This education presentation should be targeted only to those that use or are at high risk of using or those who need an understanding of VSA due to their work.

TAKE PROPER CAUTION



Why do people sniff or inhale volatile substances

- There are lots of reasons why people sniff or inhale volatile substances.

Can participants name some of the reasons why people would sniff or inhale volatile substances.

- People who sniff or inhale Volatile substances say they do it because they're bored and some say its because it's cheap and easy to get hold of.
- To understand why these substances can be a problem you need to know how volatile substances work.



What is a volatile substance



Understanding volatile substances as a drug

A 'Drug' is anything except food & water which when taken alters the way the body functions physically and/or mentally.*

Source - *WHO, 1981 www.who.int



Volatile substances are.....

- Chemicals that give off vapours or fumes
- These are sniffed or inhaled which is why they are referred to as inhalants
- It is these fumes or vapours that give people the effect of being high
- They are very cheap to buy





There 4 different kinds of Volatile Substances



Groups of volatile substances

1 - VOLATILE SOLVENTS

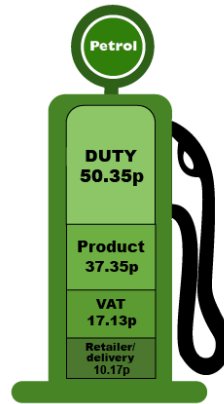
These are liquids or semi-solids such as glues, that vaporise at room temperature. The chemicals toluene & xylene are common components of these products. Products include some glues, petrol, thinners, nail polish removers, paint strippers, degreasers.



1 - VOLATILE SOLVENTS:



Glue for Bike repairs



Petrol



Paint Stripper



Degreaser



Nail polish remover



Groups of volatile substances

2 – Aerosols

These are sprays that contain propellants and solvents. These often contain hydrocarbons. Products include some: insect sprays, hair sprays, body room deodorants, spray paints.



2 – Aerosols



Spray paint



Deodorant



Hair Spray



Insect Spray



Groups of volatile substances

3 – Gases

These include medical anaesthetics and household or commercial products. Medical gasses often include; ether, chloroform, and nitrous oxide. Household and commercial products may include refrigerant's, cigarette lighter fluid and cylinder propane gas.



Gases



Refrigerants



Cigarette lighter fluid



Propane Gas



Groups of volatile substances

4. Nitrates

These are different from other forms of inhalants which act directly on the central nervous system and have mood altering effects; nitrates dilute the blood vessels and relax muscles. Products with Butyl nitrate and Amyl Nitrate includes room air freshener and room odorises.



4. Nitrates



Room Air Freshener



Room odorises



Volatile Substances- Effects and Symptoms

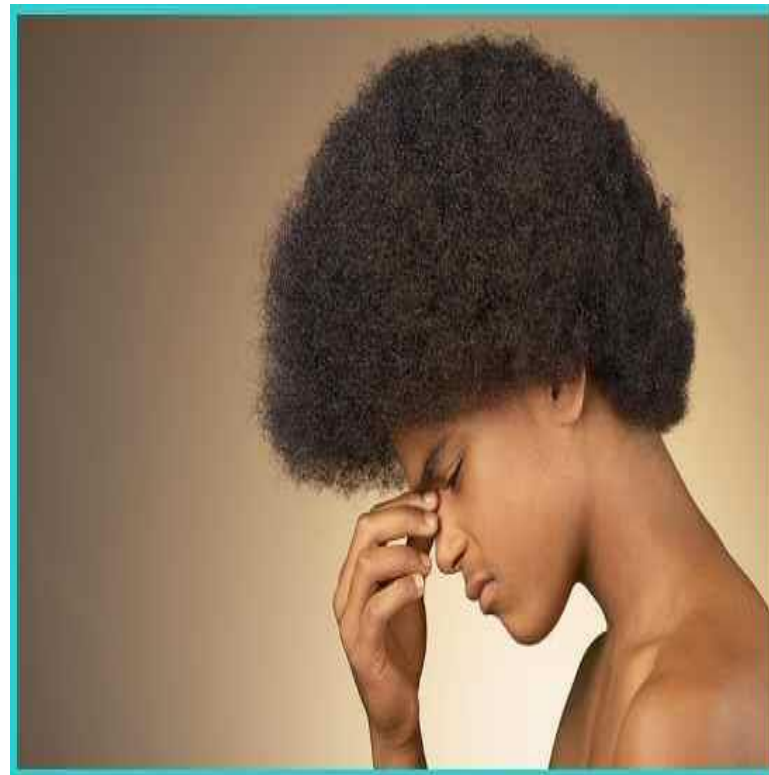


The Effects

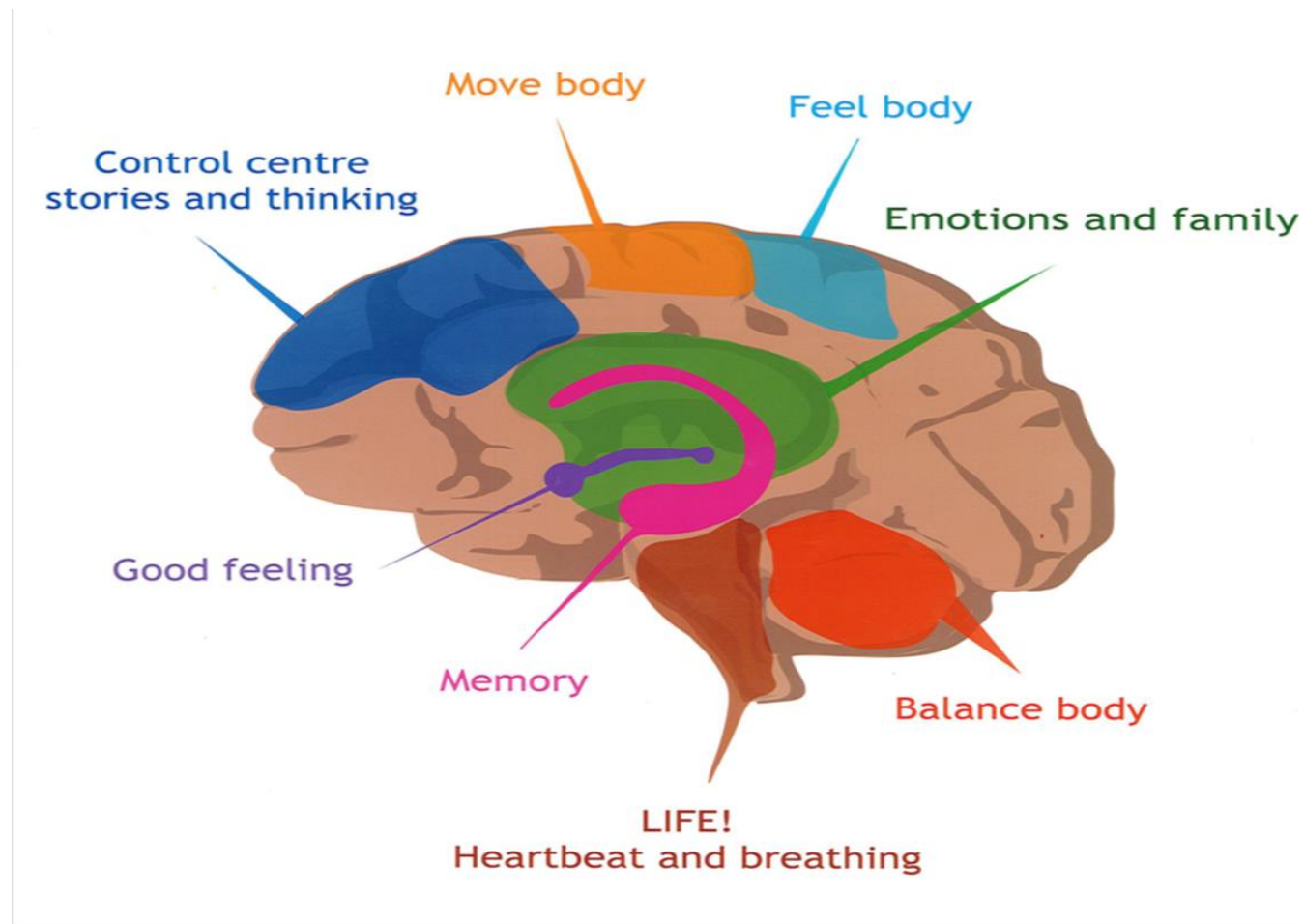
The effects of volatile substances occur and recede very quickly, within 2 – 5 minutes of using.

Repeated use is needed to maintain the intoxication.

People who misuse inhalants may feel and look like they are under the influence of alcohol, including after effects such as a hangover.



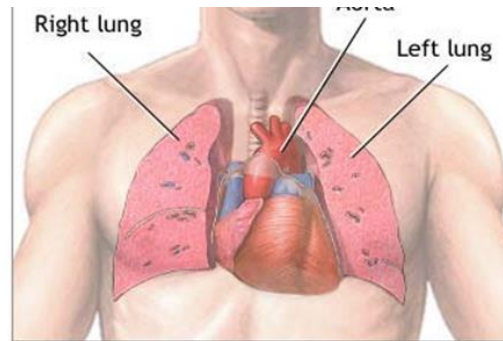
Where the effect is



What can happen

The fumes and chemicals are taken down into the lungs, then the bloodstream, where they reach the brain.

Volatile substances are dangerous especially when the amount inhaled is of greater volume than the air in your lungs.

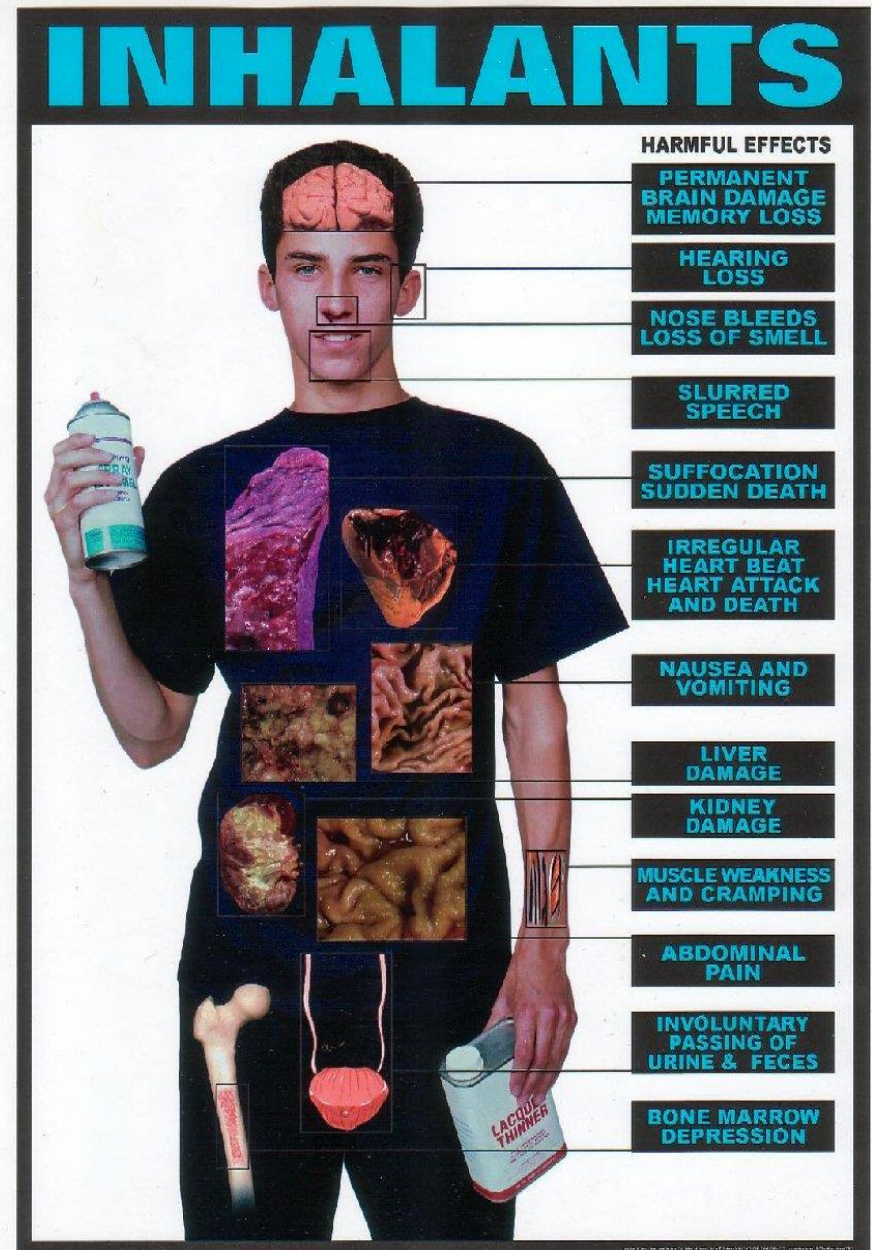


When this happens it can effect the way the lungs work as the lungs have no air left in them and people can suffocate.



Harmful effects on the body

Some of the effects of inhalants can have permanent damage to your health



What can influence the effects

Like all drugs it is difficult to generalise the effects of volatile substances

Some factors that may influence the effect are

- The substance used
- The age and gender of the person using, the amount being used
- The environment they are using in, the method of use
- Duration of their use
- The health of the person using
- Using in conjunction with other drugs and alcohol



Immediate and short term health

- Euphoria
- Runny nose
- Hallucinations
- Loss of inhibitions
- Loss of muscular coordination
- Slurred speech
- Blurred vision
- Feeling invincible
- Unconsciousness
- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Confusion & incoherence
- Vomiting
- Sudden sniffing death
- Death by suffocation
- Death by accident



Longer term health effects

- Recurrent nose bleeds
- Oral & nasal ulcerations
- Sinusitis
- Reduced decision making ability, memory loss, poor attention span
- Lethargy
- Tremors
- Indigestion
- Conjunctivitis, and blood shot eyes, blindness
- Chest pains & constant coughing
- Depression, anxiety, paranoia
- Weakness & weight loss
- Angina (Heart pain)



Sudden Sniffing Death

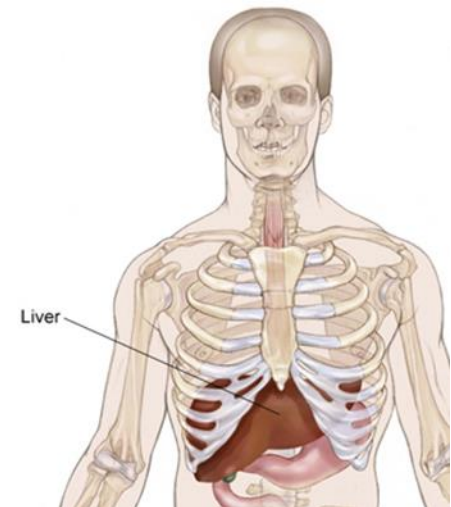
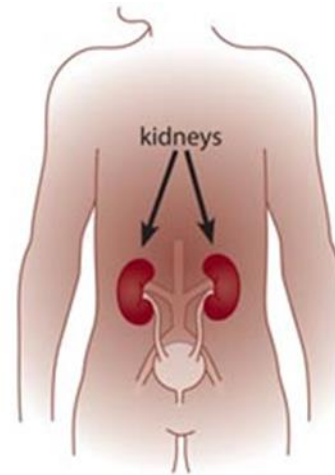
Sudden sniffing death - There is always a risk of death from sniffing inhalants. There are no safe level of using.

Sudden death sniffing involves heart failure, usually if the person is stressed or undertakes heavy exercise after using.

This is why it is life threatening to chase somebody who has been sniffing. Do not chase someone who has been sniffing.



Liver & kidney - damage can be caused by volatile substances, however this is likely to disappear once the person has stopped sniffing if the damage is not too advanced.



Signs of Volatile Substance Abuse



How do I know if someone is sniffing

- Paint stains on clothes, and body, especially around the mouth, person may smell of paint
- Sores around the mouth and nose
- Flu like symptoms, like runny nose & eyes
- Loss of appetite
- Anxiety, excitability, irritability
- There is a connection between heavy use and anti-social behaviour.
- Sniffers tend to hang out with other sniffers



Sniffing & Behaviour

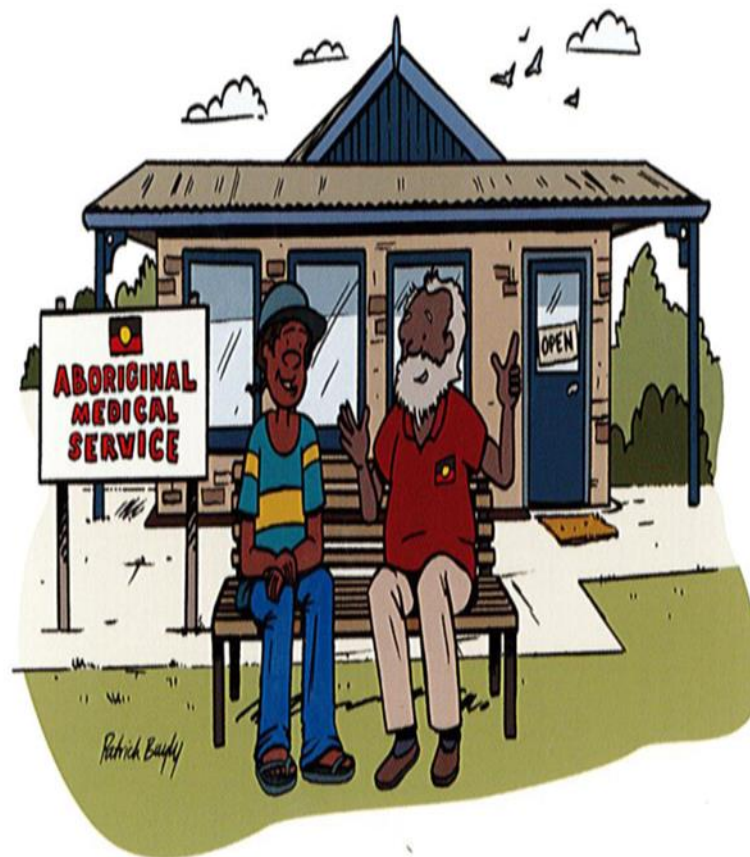
- Unsteady gait (walk funny)
- Aggression
- Inappropriate & uncontrollable giggling
- Slow responses
- No attending school
- Unusual & bizarre behaviour
- Risk taking & accidents
- Reduced impulse control
- Suspicious, secretive behaviour
- Big mood swings



Who can help

If you are worried about someone who is sniffing or a family member you can see a

- Remote AOD Worker (RAODW)
- Aboriginal Health Practitioner (AHP)
- Clinic Nurse
- Clinic Doctor



How can people access these services

- Call the health centre to see someone
- Come and see us at the clinic
- Your Doctor or Nurse can refer you to the AOD workers



*Ngurra Tjutaku Palyapayi:
everyone's home, working together
for good.*



The end

Any Questions

Thankyou for listening

If you would like to know about
Remote AOD Workforce program
and our resources

Please call us on

■ (08) 8958 2503

Or visit the website

■ www.remoteaod.com.au

