

### Effects

- High
- Dizzy / Light headed
- Disassociated with surroundings
- Numbness down hands and feet
- Hallucinations
- Slurred speech
- Sickness
- Headache
- Muscle weakness / Loss of co-ordination
- Sluggishness
- Mood swings / aggression

### Dangers

- Instant Death - the toxic fumes can make the heart sensitive to adrenaline, so if the 'sniffer' becomes excited, aggressive, shocked or does physical activity while high the heart can go into cardiac arrhythmia causing instant death. This can happen anytime, even on the first experiment. In fact, even if the person has been sniffing for many years there is still a risk every time they sniff. For this reason it is imperative that if anyone comes across someone who is sniffing they must stay calm and keep them calm at all costs until they have come down.
- Asphyxiation
- Pneumonia
- Coma / seizures
- Burns / explosions.

### Long term damage

- Brain damage
- Leukaemia and various types of cancer
- Peripheral nerve damage (mainly due to hexane content)
- Acute brain inflammation (encephalopathy) (mainly from leaded petrol.)

National Information Line

**01785 810762**

Mon-Fri, 9am - 5pm  
(excluding public holidays)



**Re-Solv**

**about:**  
**Petroleum**

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**Petrol**  
**Petrol**



Petrol is a petroleum-derived liquid mixture consisting mostly of volatile toxic hydrocarbons and is primarily used as fuel in engines.

Petrol sniffing is a common way of obtaining a high for many people and has become epidemic in some poorer communities and indigenous groups in America, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and some Pacific Islands.

Petrol sniffers deliberately inhale the petrol fumes given off for the intoxicating effect. Intoxication can be rapid, within one to five minutes. Depending on the method, the effects may last for minutes or several hours.

**There has been an increase in petrol 'sniffing' in the UK over the last 6 years.**

## Chemicals in Petrol

### Hydrocarbons:

- Highly volatile and rapidly absorbed through the lungs
- Depresses the central nervous system
- Could cause brain damage

### Leaded Petrol:

- Lead is a metal that can be taken into the body and is deposited in the bodies organs especially the brain. Once lead has entered the body it doesn't leave causing brain damage that cannot be repaired.

Additives include benzene, hexane and ethanol.

## Addictiveness

**Benzene** - Breathing high levels of benzene can result in death, while low levels can cause drowsiness, dizziness, rapid heart rate, headaches, tremors, confusion and unconsciousness.

Long-term exposure damages the bone marrow and can cause a decrease in red blood cells, leading to anaemia. It can also cause excessive bleeding and affect the immune system.

**Hexane** inhalation produces first a state of mild euphoria, followed by drowsiness with headaches and nausea.

Chronic intoxication from hexane can cause tingling and cramps in the arms and legs, followed by general muscular weakness. In severe cases, wasting away of the muscles is seen, along with a loss of coordination and problems with vision.

**Ethanol** (grain alcohol) is a central nervous system depressant and produces temporary changes in perception, mood, consciousness and behaviour. Initial symptoms include euphoria, talkativeness and relaxation followed by impaired motor, sensory and brain function.

Extreme exposure results in decreased blood flow to the brain, possible unconsciousness and even death.

### Petroleum (Consolidation) Act 1928

It may be a licensing condition that anyone in charge of a petrol station must be at least 18, and anyone dispensing petrol or operating a petrol dispensing system must be at least 16.

# The LAW



## Case Studies

- In 2006 an 18-year-old woman caused thousands of pounds of damage after the petrol she was sniffing spilt on to an electric fire. No one was injured in the fire but £12,000 of damage was caused to the property.
- A distraught mother raised the alarm in 2003 after finding her eight-year-old son sniffing petrol in the garden shed in the East Midlands.
- A 31-year-old man died after suffering 95 per cent burns when his cigarette ignited the petrol fumes he had been sniffing. His father had caught him sniffing petrol when he was a teenager and told him he would end up killing himself. As he pulled his son from the blazing garden shed the man said, "You told me I would do it."
- Young people are cutting fuel pipes to sniff and drink petrol in a variety of places across the country. The craze is growing due to the increase in quad bikes and off-road motorbikes.
- In 2005 Steven Blacker aged 14 of Somercotes, Derbyshire, died after a petrol sniffing session. His mother is angry that her son was able to buy petrol, despite his age, and wants staff to be extra vigilant.