

Short-term Use

- Severe headache
- Throat irritation
- Nose bleed
- Nausea
- Erectile problems
- Sensations of spinning or falling
- Reduced breathing & heart rate.

When the blood vessels tighten up again, users can experience unpleasant throbbing and headaches, usually short-lived. If mixed with alcohol use, these effects will contribute to a bigger hangover. Users may feel a bit foggy and lazy for an hour or two after use.

Long-term Use

- Weight loss
- Mouth or nasal sores
- Impaired smell
- Lung and nose damage
- Anaemia.

Excessive use can lead to lack of oxygen in the blood, giving users skin and lips a blue colour. This is usually accompanied by severe vomiting and can lead to clinical shock and loss of consciousness.

The role of popper use as a risk factor in HIV infection continues to be explored and debated. A review of 30 research articles examining HIV infection risk and club drug use showed some evidence for poppers being a risk factor for HIV infection but considered further research was necessary.

National Information Line

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(excluding public holidays)



Re-Solv

about:
Alkyl Nitrites

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POPPERS
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Poppers is the street term for various alkyl nitrites taken for recreational purposes through direct inhalation. In the past these included amyl nitrite, butyl nitrite and isobutyl nitrite. To keep abreast of changes in the law, recent variations have included isopropyl and cyclohexyl nitrite.

Alkyl nitrites are sold over-the-counter as products such as air fresheners and video head cleaners. Inhaled to enhance sexual pleasure, these products have long been part of the club culture from the 1970s disco scene to the 1980s and 1990s rave scene.

Inhalant effects

- Inhalation of alkyl nitrite causes the blood pressure to fall within ten seconds. The blood pressure is said to continue to fall for about thirty seconds and to return to normal after approximately a minute and a half.
- Poppers cause muscles around blood vessels to relax, making your heart speed up to pump more blood. Oxygen-rich blood reaching the brain produces a "rush" sensation.

Product names include:

- Ram,
- Thrust,
- Rush,
- Rock Hard,
- TNT,
- Liquid Gold.



- They are often used during sex as inhaling nitrites relaxes smooth muscles throughout the body, including the muscles of the anus and the vagina.
- The head rush, euphoria, uncontrollable laughter or giggling, and other sensations that result from the blood pressure drop are often felt to increase sexual arousal and desire.

Possible Risks

- Inhaling poppers lowers your inhibitions, leaving you vulnerable and likely to take risks.
- Poppers are toxic and can kill you if you swallow them. Almost all overdoses are due to inexperienced users thinking that the chemical can be drunk.
- Poppers are highly flammable. Keep away from cigarettes, candles, and lighters.
- There has also been a suggestion that poppers may weaken the immune system, however any damage is undone within a few days of non use.
- Because poppers cause blood vessels to open, it is easier to get an infection, including sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV.
- Poppers pose extra risks for people who have suppressed immune systems, heart problems, low or high blood pressure, anaemia, or are pregnant.
- Combining poppers with stimulants like speed and cocaine increases risks.
- As poppers increase pressure within the eyeball, users with glaucoma take additional risks when using poppers.
- It is suggested that taking Viagra with nitrites could cause a serious decrease in blood pressure, leading to fainting, stroke, or even heart attack.

According to St George's University of London, there have been 14 deaths related to inhaling alkyl nitrites since 1971, 3 of which were in 2006.

Addictiveness

Poppers aren't addictive in the way some drugs are, but they can be habit-forming as the 'high' is short lived and more is needed to maintain it. Tolerance develops within 2-3 weeks if used on a daily basis, but this is lost after a few days of stopping.

Some people become so dependent on them as a sexual stimulant that they cannot climax any other way.

Amyl nitrite is controlled under the Medicines Act and it is an offence for anyone other than a licensed outlet, such as a pharmacist, to supply it.

In 2007 isobutyl nitrite was classified as a class 2 carcinogen under the EU Directive 76/769/EEC, making it illegal for shops to sell this variety of poppers.

A decision made by the *Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency*, means that any product on sale with a psychoactive effect could be classed as a medicine regardless of how it is marketed, and so controlled under the Medicines Act.

Poppers you might find on sale today will probably be of the 'isopropyl' variety and may be described as "room aromas".

The LAW

