

Help and information

Text or WhatsApp **Re-Solv** with any questions on **07496 959930** or phone in confidence on **01785 810762** from 9am-5pm, Mon-Fri. There's more online at re-solv.org/healthy.

At talktofrank.com you can search for information on every drug and there's a confidential phone helpline on **0300 123 6600**, text **82111** and live chat service.

There's practical advice too on legal highs and other drugs at drugscience.org.uk and wearetheloop.co.uk.

The Global Drug Survey has some interesting findings about nitrous. Google **'global drug survey 2015 findings'** for practical nitrous safety tips.

Young Addaction have good advice for staying drug-safe at festivals: youngaddaction.org.uk/know-the-score/advice-links

Re-Solv

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Helpline: 01785 810762

Please let us know if you would like this information in another format.

Nitrous Oxide - the Lowdown

BALLOONS, CHARGERS, HIPPI CRACK, LAUGHING GAS, NOS, WHIPPITS...

Nitrous oxide is a gas used medically as an anaesthetic. It's also used in catering as the propellant in whipped cream chargers. Some people use it as a recreational drug, usually inhaled from a balloon, to get high. It acts as a 'depressant' (not unlike alcohol), in that it slows down your body's system and leads to feelings of relaxation or happiness - hence the name 'laughing gas'.

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Is it legal?

It's not a crime to possess nitrous oxide for personal use. But 2016 legislation makes it illegal to import, produce, sell or supply psychoactive substances, and this includes nitrous oxide for recreational purposes.

Is it dangerous?

Deaths from nitrous oxide tend to occur, not from inhaling a single balloon, but from heavy use where the body becomes starved of oxygen leading to suffocation or unconsciousness.

Using nitrous may also be riskier for people who have heart conditions.

Nitrous oxide also inactivates Vitamin B12, a lack of which can cause anaemia and, in cases of prolonged use, 'peripheral neuropathy' or nerve damage.

Is it harmful?

There is always a risk associated with taking drugs of any kind. This can be due to the drug itself, to the increased risk of accident, or to behaving in ways you wouldn't otherwise choose (e.g. unsafe sex). So please:

- **Be as informed as possible**
Particularly if you have pre-existing health conditions.
- **Be careful where you get your nitrous from**
Make sure you are not being supplied a more dangerous gas like butane.
- **Don't inhale directly from the charger**
- **Don't use a mask or put a plastic bag over your head**
- **Don't overdo it**
If you plan to use more than one balloon, let your body recover in between.
- **Eat**
Particularly if you're vegetarian or anaemic, eat to replenish your levels of B12 - eggs, cheese, marmite etc. are good.
- **Don't take drugs on your own**
Stay with a group of friends and agree that one of you will stay sober in order to keep an eye out for the others.
- **Keep to one drug**
Don't mix different drugs or drink alcohol. The results can be anything from unpredictable to actively dangerous.
- **Plan your evening**
Stay in a safe environment - and know how you're getting home.