

Help and information

Solvent abuse is not physically addictive, so you CAN stop; it's a question of overcoming the 'psychological' addiction – breaking the habit. We're here to help.

Text or WhatsApp **Re-Solv** with any questions on **07496 959930** or phone in confidence on **01785 810762** from 9.30am – 4pm, 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. You can also find your local substance misuse support service by typing in your postcode.

If you're worried about your mental health, call **Mind** on **0300 123 3393** or text **86463**.

Adfam is the national organisation working with and for families affected by drugs and alcohol: visit www.adfam.org.uk to find your local support group.

Re-Solv

[@resolvUK](https://twitter.com/resolvUK) re-solv.org/healthy Helpline: **01785 810762**
Please let us know if you would like this information in another format.

Solvent Abuse - the Lowdown

AEROSOLS, GAS, NITROUS, PETROL,
POPPERS, SOLVENTS, SOME GLUES,
VOLATILE SUBSTANCES...

Solvent abuse is when the volatile chemicals in everyday products like aerosols and cigarette lighter refills are inhaled for the purpose of getting high. Around the UK, it's also known as volatile substance abuse (or 'VSA' for short), sniffing, tooting, buzzing and huffing.

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Is it legal?

It is legal to possess all these products. Most of them have a legitimate household purpose, e.g. aerosols or lighter refills. It is also legal to possess poppers and nitrous oxide (laughing gas).

However, it is illegal to import, produce, sell or supply nitrous oxide for recreational purposes. It is also illegal to sell products like butane gas if the seller believes they are going to be inhaled to get high.

Is it dangerous?

Yes – solvent abuse kills about 40 people a year in the UK, some the first time they use, some who have used for many years. Inhaling these chemicals causes the heart to beat irregularly which can lead to a fatal heart attack. Some volatile substances are more dangerous than others and butane gas (e.g. in aerosols and cigarette lighter refills) is currently the biggest killer.

Harm reduction

There is no 'safe' form of solvent abuse that will take away the risk of death from heart failure. This risk will always be present but, if you choose to use, please:-

- **Don't do it alone.** There is always a risk of death and someone with you can call an ambulance.
- **Avoid spraying directly into the mouth.**
- **Never use a mask or put a plastic bag over your head** as this can lead to suffocation.
- **Don't smoke or light cigarettes.** Most volatile substances are highly flammable.
- **Don't drink alcohol or use other drugs** at the same time as using gases/solvents.
- **Make sure people know where you are.** Stay in a safe environment – away from roads, heights or anywhere you could have an accident.
- **Don't argue with, chase or excite someone who is high on gases/solvents.** Raising their adrenaline levels increases their risk of death.