

Help and information

Re-Solv

Text or whatsapp **Re-Solv** with any questions on **07496 959930** or phone in confidence on **01785 817885** from 10am - 4pm, Mon - Fri. There's more online at **re-solv.org**.

FRANK

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.



If you have concerns about your mental health, you can call Mind on **0300 123 3393**, text **86463** or visit **mind.org.uk**.

THE MIX

The Mix provides free, confidential information and support for under-25s on **0808 808 4994** and at **themix.org.uk**.

Re-Solv

 @resolvUK

 info@re-solv.org

 Helpline: 01785 817885

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

Nitrous oxide: The Lowdown



Balloons, laughing gas, NOS, whippits...

Nitrous oxide is a gas used medically as an anesthetic. It's also used in catering for whipping cream.

Some people use it as a recreational drug, usually inhaled from a balloon. It acts like a 'depressant' (similar to alcohol) and slows down your body's system leading to feelings of relaxation or happiness.



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IS IT LEGAL?

Nitrous oxide is controlled as a Class C substance under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 if it is, or is likely to be, wrongfully inhaled. Those found in unlawful possession will face either an unlimited fine, a visible community punishment or a caution – which would appear on their criminal record. Repeat serious offenders may face a prison sentence of up to two years, an unlimited fine, or both. The penalty for supply or production is up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine, or both.

IS IT DANGEROUS?

There is always a risk associated with taking drugs of any kind. This can be due to the drug itself or to the increased risk of accidents.

Nitrous oxide inactivates Vitamin B12, potentially causing anaemia. Recent medical reports indicate that heavy use can lead to serious nerve damage. Users report tingling sensations, loss of feeling in the hands and feet and even paralysis.

Inhaling a single balloon tends to be less risky than regular repeated use. Heavy use can lead to suffocation, nerve damage, paralysis or, in rare cases, death.

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

There have been numerous reports of car accidents caused by people driving while inhaling nitrous oxide.

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 CANISTER

TAKE CARE WHEN DISCHARGING CANISTERS

Don't let them come into contact with your skin - the extreme cold can cause burns.

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.

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.

DON'T DRIVE

Don't inhale nitrous oxide while driving. You could lose consciousness and cause an accident. Don't get in a car with anyone who is using nitrous oxide.

DON'T MIX

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 plan how you're getting home in advance.