

## Inhalant Abuse and Your Body

### Long-term damage

The toxins are difficult for the body to purge. They destroy the fatty protective layer that surrounds nerves, causing those nerves to die away, never to be restored. Nearly all parts of the body are affected. Long-time inhalant users develop a tolerance to the substances, causing them to use more to produce the same level of intoxication, or to turn to alcohol or depressants.

Brain and central nervous system damage may manifest itself as a change in personality, inability to concentrate or think analytically, loss of memory, anxiety, hostility, depression, suicidal thoughts and convulsions.

Muscle weakness and atrophy

Birth defects

Loss of bone marrow  
Blood disorders including anemia and leukemia

Liver damage

Optic nerve damage sometimes resulting in blindness

Severe irritation of skin, eyes and mucous membranes

Hearing loss

Heart irregularities

Weight loss

Respiratory difficulty

Kidney failure

Digestive disorders

Research/ Jayne Palmer

Star Tribune graphic/ Ray Grumney

This handout is made available through the

### Maine Inhalant Abuse Prevention Work Group

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For more information about inhalants please contact

Maine Office of Substance Abuse Information and Resource Center

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