

# Study: White kids most likely to abuse inhalants

## First-time abusers split evenly between boys and girls

**WASHINGTON (CNN) -- Kids who try to get high by sniffing glue, lighter fluid and other chemicals are more likely to be white and come from families that make more than double the poverty level, according to a federal study.**

The study of inhalant abuse found that about 34 percent of young people between 12- and 17-years-old who tried inhalants for the first time came from families that earned at least 200 to 399 percent more than the federal poverty threshold. About 33 percent came from families that make 400 percent or more of the poverty level.

In 2004, the federal poverty threshold was \$18,850 for a family of four.

Each year between 2002 and 2004, about 600,000 young people said they tried inhalants for the first time, according to study by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Seventy percent were white; and first-time users were as likely to be girls as boys -- at 50.5 percent female to 49.5 percent male.

The report said 19.4 percent said they had used inhalants on 13 or more days in the previous year. Almost 35 percent said they used them only once.

Thirty percent of those who said they tried inhalants for the first time were 12- to 13-years-old; 39.2 percent were 14 or 15; and 30.8 percent were 16 or 17, said the report.

Most said they had used cigarettes, alcohol or other drugs before trying inhalants. More than 67 percent said they had drunk alcohol, almost 60 percent had smoked cigarettes and 42 percent had used marijuana. Almost 36 percent said they had used all three before trying inhalants.

The report listed the most commonly abused inhalants:

- 30 percent of respondents said they used glue, shoe polish or toluene -- a chemical found in paints, lacquers and solvents.
- 24.9 percent said they used gasoline or lighter fluid.
- 24.9 percent used nitrous oxide, or "whippets."
- 23.4 percent used spray paints.

"These new data show that too many pre-teens and young teens are sniffing or inhaling common everyday household products with potentially disastrous, even deadly results," said Charles Curie, SAMHSA administrator. "We hope to use this opportunity to help raise awareness among parents about the potential for danger in their own homes."

Inhaling chemicals can cause a quick, powerful high similar to the effects of drinking alcohol, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The symptoms are short-lived, so abusers often use the chemicals repeatedly to maintain their high.

The chemicals can cause serious side effects including seizures, asphyxiation, comas, heart failure and death.