



## SOLVENTS

Solvents cover a huge number of substances: gas lighter refills, aerosols containing hairspray, deodorants and air fresheners, tins or tubes of glue, some paints, thinners and correcting fluids, cleaning fluids, surgical spirit, dry-cleaning fluids and petroleum products. When inhaled, solvents have a similar effect to alcohol. They make people feel uninhibited, euphoric and dizzy.

**Slang:** Thinners, volatile substances.

### Appearance and use

Solvents are sniffed from a cloth (by dowsing it in the substance), a sleeve (holding it over the bottle containing the substance) or a plastic bag (putting the bag over your head and inhaling that way). Gas products are also sprayed directly onto the back of the throat – this limits your control over the dose.

### The effects

- Solvents will make you feel dizzy and get the giggles – like when you drink too much alcohol. You can also hallucinate depending on what you've inhaled.
- The effects of inhaling solvents will be quite short-lived, so people continue using.
- Most will feel slightly tired, have headaches and describe a 'hang-over' type feeling after inhaling solvents.
- Tolerance to solvents can build up over 2-3 days of continuous use, but no physical dependence has been found – though, psychological dependence can occur with people finding it hard to quite despite knowing the harm to themselves.

### The law

Solvent misuse isn't illegal but it is illegal to sell them to children under the age of 18 years and to those intoxicated and appearing likely to inhale them.

### The risks

- You can black out from inhalation.
- Fatal heart problems have been recorded amongst first time users
- Inhaling solvents by spraying them to the back of the throat can make your throat swell so you can't breathe, it also slows down your heart rate whatever way you inhale it.
- The route in which you inhale solvents can also play a part e.g. if you choose to put a bag over your head, it can cause suffocation.

## **GBL/GHB (Gamma Hydroxybutyrate)**

Gammahydroxybutyrate (GHB) is a dangerous drug with sedative and anaesthetic effects. It's hard to tell the difference between a dose that gives a pleasant buzz and one that leads to an overdose that could kill you.

**Slang:** Street names for drugs can vary around the country. GHB, GBH, Liquid Ecstasy.

### **Appearance and use**

GHB is usually sold as an odourless liquid in small bottles or capsules and a teaspoon or capful is the usual dosage. The effects kick in after approximately 10 minutes and can last several hours.

### **The effects**

- A small dosage can make you feel happy and euphoric, but the more you take, the more down and sleepy you will feel.

### **The law**

GHB is a Class C drug . It is illegal to have, give away or sell. You can receive up to 2 years in jail for possession and up to 14 years if you supply for you (and your friends!).

### **Cost**

A 30ml plastic container is about £15.

### **Purity**

The strength of the liquid varies widely from bottle to bottle and if it's the 'wrong' mix, you can burn your mouth swallowing it.

### **The risks**

- If you ingest too much, you can feel sick, dizzy and disoriented. Similarly, if you don't know the dose, you can lose consciousness if you take too much.
- Its use can be fatal when mixed with alcohol or other drugs.
- GHB has been strongly linked with drug assisted sexual assaults. It can easily be slipped into a drink as it is odourless, colourless, and tasteless.