Inhalant Abuse

Inhalant abuse is the intentional breathing in (*inhalation*) of substances to obtain a feeling of well-being (*euphoria*). Inhalants produce vapors. When these vapors are inhaled, they produce a mind-altering effect. People breathe in various gases to get high. They can cause serious health problems. **These problems may include:**

- Headaches.
- Dizziness.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Burns.
- Cough.
- Pneumonia.
- Lung problems.
- Confusion.
- Temporary and/or permanent muscle, nerve or brain damage.
- Death.

The initial treatment of inhalant use is usually supportive in the emergency department. X-ray studies may be performed to check how the lungs are doing. After initial treatment has been given and the immediate health concerns have been addressed, it is so important that substance abuse evaluation and treatment be started without delay. Complete recovery is possible. First you have to admit you have a problem. Call your caregiver or a local drug treatment program. For more information, call the National Inhalant Prevention Coalition's HOTLINE (800) 269-4237, or look on the web at www.inhalants.org.

Avoid other street drugs or alcohol. Substance abuse is the most important cause of premature illness, disability and death. There is potential that you may die with one use of an inhalant.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a cough.
- You have difficulty breathing.
- You feel short of breath.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

Document Released: 12/18/2006 Document Re-Released: 03/14/2011
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.