

Remember...

Effects of drug and alcohol use are different for every pregnancy and every infant, depending on reasons such as:

- amount used
- if other drugs are used, and which ones
- when in the pregnancy the drugs are used
- mother's general health
- other risks in the baby's environment

It helps you and your baby if you cut back or stop using inhalants and solvents at any point in your pregnancy.

For more information about the effects of inhalant and solvent use during pregnancy, call:

- your doctor
- a public health nurse
- an alcohol and drug counsellor
- Motherrisk infoline (confidential counselling)
Toll Free 1-877-327-4636

Sheway

369 Hawks Avenue, Vancouver, B.C.
Phone: 604-658-1200

A/D Information Line

Phone: 604-660-9382
1-800-663-1441

Detox Access Line

Phone: 604-658-1250

Pender Clinic

59 W. Pender
Phone: 604-669-9181

3-Bridges Community Health Centre

1292 Hornby Street, Vancouver
Phone: 604-736-9844

Community Aboriginal Health Advocate:

Phone: 604-873-1833

Mental Health Liaison Worker

Phone: 604-872-6723

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Inhalant and Solvent Use During Pregnancy

Effects on Mother and Baby



4500 Oak Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 3N1

How do inhalants and solvents work in the body?

Common household or industrial products contain chemicals that, if sniffed or inhaled, quickly cause feelings similar to alcohol intoxication: excitement followed by drowsiness, dizziness, and hangover.

Substances used for inhaling or sniffing include solvents (glue, gasoline, paint thinner, cleaning fluids) and aerosols (compressed gases from spray cans like hairspray and spray paint).

Effects are felt within seconds as the drug goes directly into the bloodstream from the lungs

What are the effects of inhalants and solvents for the pregnancy woman?

- damage to the kidneys
- high blood pressure
- irregular heartbeat
- nausea and loss of appetite
- increased risk of miscarriage

What are the effects of prenatal inhalant and solvent use on the baby?

- smaller weight at birth
- smaller head size
- kidney problems

Use of inhalants and solvents during pregnancy may cause symptoms of alcohol-like withdrawal in newborn babies, including:

- high-pitched cry
- crying for long periods of time
- tremors (shaky)
- floppy muscle tone
- difficulty with feeding
- poor sleeping

There may be development of “Toluene Embryopathy Syndrome” (similar to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) which causes lasting physical, mental and behaviour problems.

What about breastfeeding?

There is not much information available about inhalant and solvent use while breastfeeding.

Check with your doctor.

What are the outcomes for children?

Little information is available. Some studies have found the following effects:

- delays in development of movement, speech and thinking skills
- behavioural disturbances, including hyperactivity and aggressiveness
- continued slow physical growth