An annual average of 593,000 adolescents ages 12 to 17 use inhalants for the first time each year, according to combined data from the 2002 to 2006 National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health. The most frequently mentioned types of inhalant used were glue, shoe polish, or toluene (29.6%); gasoline or lighter fluid (25.7%); and spray paints (24.4%)—household products that are readily accessible to many youths. Younger adolescents (ages 12 to 15) were most likely to use these three types of inhalants, while older youths (ages 16 or 17) were more likely to use nitrous oxide or whippets (43.4% and 59.3%, respectively; data not shown). For more information about inhalant use, visit the National Inhalant Prevention Coalition’s website at http://www.inhalants.org.

Types of Inhalants Used by Youths Ages 12 to 17 Who Reported Using Inhalants for the First Time in the Past Year, 2002 to 2006

- Glue, Shoe Polish, or Toluene: 29.6%
- Gasoline or Lighter Fluid: 25.7%
- Spray Paints: 24.4%
- Nitrous Oxide or Whippets: 22.7%
- Some Other Aerosol Spray: 20.5%
- Correction Fluid, Degreaser, or Cleaning Fluid: 19.4%
- Amyl Nitrite, "Poppers," Locker Room Odorizers, or "Rush": 15.3%
- Lacquer Thinner, or Other Paint Solvents: 12.5%
- Lighter Gases, Such as Butane or Propane: 8.7%
- Halothane, Ether, or Other Anesthetics: 3.6%

NOTE: The NSDUH defines inhalants as “liquids, sprays, and gases that people sniff or inhale to get high or to make them feel good.”