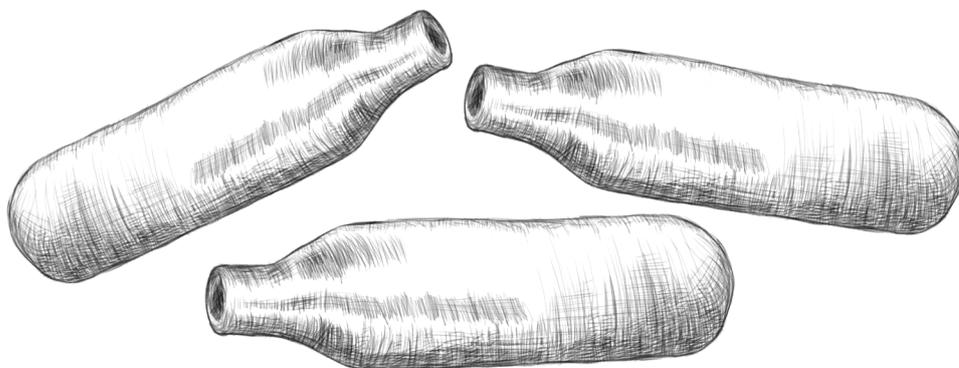


Do you wonder if your teenager is using laughing gas?

This brochure is about nitrous oxide, or laughing gas. It provides information and support on how to help your teenager.

In recent years, laughing gas has become popular as a recreational drug. Canisters and tanks of it, as nitrous oxide, can be bought legally online and in shops. There are also people who openly sell balloons filled with it on the streets.

Many think laughing gas is harmless, but this is not true. Recreational use of laughing gas leads to a risk of serious damage to the nervous system and brain. The risk increases with repeated use. It is impossible to know how much an individual can tolerate before crossing the line; it varies from person to person. The more you use, the greater the risk is of serious neurological damage.



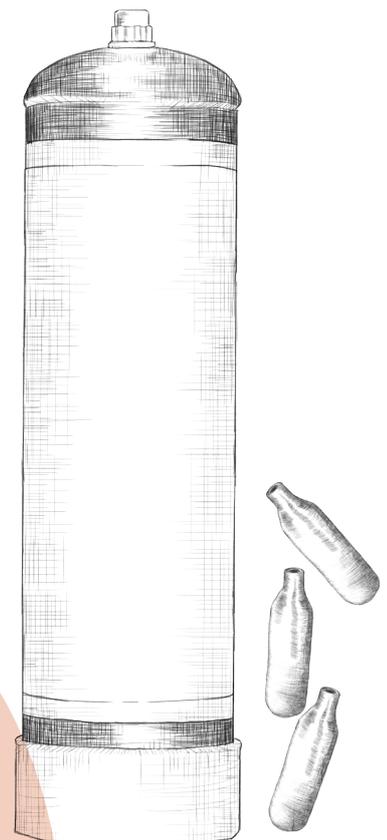
About

- Nitrous oxide is a medicine used as pain relief in the medical field. It is provided by trained healthcare professionals who monitor the dosage and strength.
- Non-medical nitrous oxide is intended for use as a propellant, mainly in whipped cream dispensers.
- When you inhale pure nitrous oxide, you are not getting any oxygen, which can lead to dizziness or fainting.
- Using nitrous oxide can cause neurological damage, with numbness in the arms and legs. A person can develop difficulty in standing and walking. It can also lead to mental health issues, such as anxiety, and cognitive impairment similar to dementia. It also increases the risk of blood clots.
- Nitrous oxide is extremely cold when it leaves the container, which can lead to cold burns in the mouth, throat and airways.
- There are no preventive measures that can be taken to make nitrous oxide less harmful to inhale.



Good to know

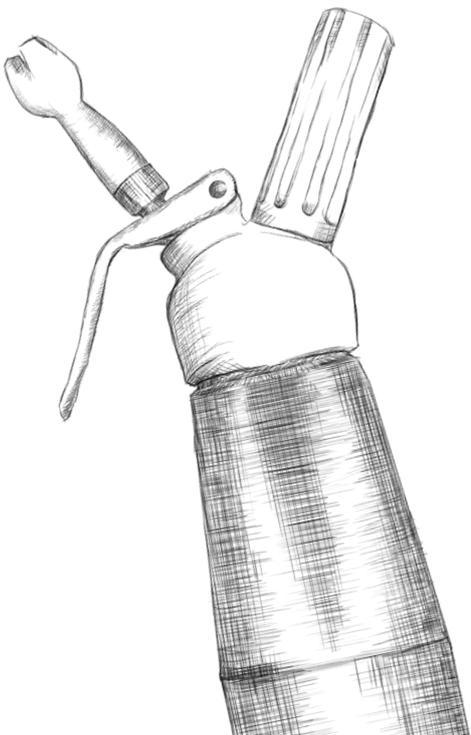
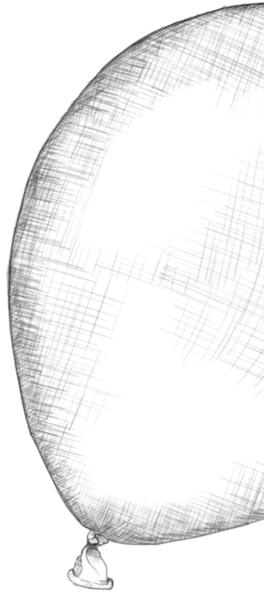
- Nitrous oxide is available to purchase in small canisters made for whipped cream dispensers, and in large tanks. When people inhale it as a stimulant, they often do so directly from the canister or tank, or by filling a balloon with the gas, to then inhale it from the balloon.
- Nitrous oxide gives a high of 1–2 minutes, which creates a relaxed, giggly feeling. It can also relieve pain and cause hallucinations.
- Although laughing gas has become more common, the majority of pupils in year nine of compulsory school and year two of upper-secondary school have not used it. The proportion of young people using laughing gas varies in different parts of the country.



What can I do as a parent?

Try to talk about all kinds of things in everyday situations. This way, it will be natural for your child to talk about more difficult subjects, such as alcohol, drugs or sex. Ask questions and listen. Having a close relationship with your child has a protective effect.

- Because laughing gas only provides a short-term high, there is no guarantee you'll notice anything in your child's behaviour if they have been using it. But there are other signs. Nitrous oxide canisters or tanks, as well as balloons, are a clear sign of laughing gas use.
- Set clear boundaries and explain the reasoning behind your actions.
- Explain what you are afraid will happen. It's good for teenagers to know that their parents care.
- Be prepared to listen and discuss. And be patient. It takes time to build up close relationships where you dare to talk about sensitive things. This is perhaps especially true of teens. Let it take the time it takes.
- Don't forget to look to other parents or important adults around you for support. You can jointly decide what rules should apply and encourage each other.





Who can you turn to if you have questions and want help and support?

The Swedish Poisons Information Centre gives advice and answers to questions about laughing gas. Call 010-456 67 00 or visit giftinformation.se.

You can also contact the school health services at your child's school, your health centre or your local authority's social services.

Read more

Giftinformation.se

Fullkoll.nu
(in Swedish only)

1177.se

Drugsmart.se
(in Swedish only)

Youmo.se