

# The risks of nitrous oxide



# About nitrous oxide

Nitrous oxide is a volatile substance when it is a gas at room temperature.

It has legitimate uses:

- To numb pain during medical procedures, such as dental work
- In engines to increase their power output
- In catering, it's used as a propellant in some aerosol cans, like whipped cream

## The effects

The effects of nitrous oxide vary depending on how much you inhale, but they include:

- Feelings of euphoria, relaxation and calmness
- Dizziness, difficulty in thinking straight and fits of giggles/laughter
- Sound distortions or even hallucinations
- In some people, a headache can be an unwanted immediate effect

It is a depressant drug and so it slows down your brain functions and how your body responds to messages your brain sends out.

## The risks

- Nitrous oxide can cause dizziness or affect your judgement. You may take risks that you normally wouldn't
- You could become unconscious or die from lack of oxygen. This is because the available oxygen for breathing is effectively pushed out by the nitrous oxide
- The risk is greater if you consume the gas in an enclosed space or use a plastic bag that covers both your nose and mouth
- You could get nerve damage because it leads to Vitamin B deficiency
- Numbness in fingers and toes which can lead to pain and discomfort

## Mixing

Mixing nitrous oxide with other drugs or alcohol is especially dangerous, as it can increase the risks associated with these substances, so you're more at risk of accidents or death.

# The law and nitrous oxide

Following the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 it is now illegal to supply or import nitrous oxide for human consumption except in specific circumstances, such as use in medicine and dentistry.

Like drink or drug driving, it's illegal to drive under the influence of a substance that affects your driving.

If caught, you could face:

- A fine
- Disqualification from driving
- A prison sentence

# Reporting

**In an emergency always call 999.**

If you are concerned about drug use in your community, or believe a property is being used regularly for drug consumption, please contact Hampshire Constabulary on **101** or Crimestoppers anonymously on **0800 555 111**.

If you would like help with your own drug use, or are living in fear or debt because of drugs, you can contact FRANK for friendly, confidential drugs information and advice on **0300 123 6600**, text your question to **82111**, or visit **[talktofrank.com](http://talktofrank.com)**.



# Contact us

## Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council

01252 844 844 | [www.basingstoke.gov.uk](http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk)

## Hart District Council

01252 622 122 | [www.hart.gov.uk](http://www.hart.gov.uk)

## Rushmoor Borough Council

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