

What are the risks?

Using laughing gas has a number of different risks.

Psychological:

- Distortion of sound
- Hallucinations
- Dissociation
- Mood swings
- Depression
- Slowed reactions
- Brain damage
- Anxiety
- Suicidal thoughts
- Memory loss

Physical:

- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Loss of balance
- Headaches
- Anaemia
- Vit D deficiency
- Slowed reactions
- Unconsciousness
- Death
- Nerve damage
- Increased risk of accidents

Did you know?

Sulphur dioxide, a poisonous gas, is added to the nitrous oxide used in engines to discourage people from using it to get 'high'.

Laughing gas and the law

It is illegal to supply or import nitrous oxide for human consumption.

Like drinking and driving, it's illegal to drive if your driving has been impaired by taking drugs and you can even remain unfit to drive the next day.

A conviction for a drug-related offence could have a serious impact. It can stop you visiting certain countries – for example the United States – and limit the types of jobs you can apply for.

Find out more

If you would like more information or support for your use of laughing gas or you are affected by someone else's use please contact your local service.

Information is also available at:

NHS Website: www.nhs.uk

Talk to Frank Website: www.talktofrank.com

HOW TO CONTACT US

Inclusionadmin@mpft.nhs.uk

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You. Me. Us

Laughing Gas

What you need to know!



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What is laughing gas?

- Nitrous oxide is a gas with several legitimate uses (numb pain in medical procedures and some food containers to keep it fresh are just some examples).
- When inhaled it can make people feel euphoric and relaxed. This happy feeling has led to it being nicknamed 'laughing gas'. Some people also experience hallucinations.

The myths

- There are no dangerous side effects
- It is legal to use in any form
- It is safe to use straight out of the canister
- It is always legal to supply
- It is the same as helium

How is laughing gas taken?

Nitrous oxide is most commonly inhaled through the mouth. Because nitrous oxide is a pressurised gas in the canister, there is a risk of harming yourself if you inhale nitrous oxide straight from the canister. This method can lead to sudden death due to a lack of oxygen and is one reason why nitrous oxide is sold to people in balloons.

There are three main legitimate uses of nitrous oxide:

- To numb pain during medical procedures such as dental work
- In engines to increase their power output
- In catering, in whipped cream aerosol cans to prevent the cream going 'bad' and in food packaging to prevent the food from rotting

What does it look like?

At room temperature nitrous oxide (laughing gas) is a colourless, non flammable gas that is slightly sweet smelling and tasting.

Recreational users often get it from whipped-cream chargers, sometimes called 'whippets', which are single-use, finger length steel cartridges containing 8g of highly pressurised nitrous oxide. The gas is commonly transferred to a container, e.g. a balloon, from which the gas is inhaled.



Did you know?

Laughing gas is sometimes called nitro, N2O, NOS, nags, whippet, hippy crack, buzz bomb or balloons.

What are the effects?

Nitrous oxide is depressant-type drug, which means it slows down your brain and your body's responses.

The effects of nitrous oxide vary depending on how much has been inhaled but they include:

- Feelings of euphoria
- Relaxation
- Calmness
- Dizziness
- Difficulty in thinking straight
- Fits of giggles/laughter
- Sound distortions
- Hallucinations
- Headache
- Loss of balance