

POPPERS



nitrites

WHAT ARE POPPERS?

- "Poppers" is a slang term for a class of chemicals called "alkyl nitrites" or simply "nitrites."
- Nitrites are used medically for the treatment of angina and other heart conditions, as they dilate blood vessels and allow blood to flow more easily to the heart.
- Recreationally, they are sold in little bottles as "video head cleaners," "polish removers" or "room deodorizers." Inside the bottle they are liquid, but because they have a very low vapor point, as soon as the bottle is opened or "popped" they turn into a gas.
- The vapors are inhaled from the open bottle immediately.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

- The effects from inhaling nitrites are felt within a few seconds and last for one to two minutes.
- Nitrites relax smooth muscles tissue around blood vessels, causing the blood vessels to dilate. This increases heart rate and causes more oxygen-rich blood to reach the brain, producing a "rush" sensation.
- Many users report dizziness or feelings that the room is spinning.
- Headaches are common due to the expansion of blood vessels in the brain.
- Because poppers relax muscles in the anus and vagina, they are sometimes used during sex to facilitate penetration.

BE CAREFUL

- Since poppers are not regulated, the exact contents of these products are not known, and they are not safety tested.
- Do not swallow the liquid inside the bottle as this can be fatal. If it happens accidentally, call 911 or Poison Control.
- Contact with the skin can cause irritation and rashes.

- Extensive use can damage the nose or lungs.
- Poppers are highly flammable. Keep away from cigarettes, candles, and lighters.
- Studies show that poppers reduce the functioning of the immune system for several days after use.
- Because poppers cause blood vessels to open, it is easier to get an infection, including sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV.
- Poppers pose extra risks for people who have suppressed immune systems, heart problems, low or high blood pressure, a history of cerebral hemorrhaging, anemia, or are pregnant.
- Combining poppers with stimulants like speed and cocaine increases risks. Combining poppers and Viagra is dangerous because both cause blood pressure to drop.
- Poppers can affect your judgment. If you are planning on being intimate, put on a condom before you use them.
- To prevent spilling and evaporation, pour a small amount in a separate bottle filled with cotton and store tightly sealed in a refrigerator or freezer.
- Possession of amyl nitrite without a doctor's prescription is illegal. Federal law bans the manufacture and distribution of butyl nitrite and related substances, although these provisions have not often been enforced.
- **Be self aware!** If you choose to use poppers, having an intention is the best way to maximize the benefits and reduce risks.

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