

# Brain, other organs can be damaged by inhalants

In recognition of Brain Awareness Week, I want to share a list of facts not only about the brain but also about other major organs in the body that can and do become easily be affected by the use of the inhalants I mentioned in my column last week.

Please, use this list to discuss the dangers of inhalants with your children.

• Brain — The chemicals abused by inhalant users affect different parts of the brain, producing a variety of sensory and psychological disorders. Many inhalants are



**cris  
lovington**

• prevention center

thought to dissolve the protective myelin sheath that surrounds neurons, brain cells, resulting in cell death.

• Cerebral cortex — Cellular death here causes permanent personality changes, memory impair-

coordination. Inhalant-related damage results in loss of coordination and slurred speech. Chronic abusers experience tremors and uncontrollable shaking.

• Ophthalmic nerve — Toluene may affect this nerve causing sight

ment, hallucinations and learning disabilities.

• Cerebellum — This is the center that controls balance and

disorders.

• Blood — Some substances like nitrites and methylene chloride (paint thinner) chemically block the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood.

• Lungs — Repeated use of spray paint as an inhalant can cause lung damage.

• Heart — Abuse of inhalants can result in "sudden sniffing death syndrome." This is due to a sudden and unexpected disturbance of the heart's rhythm. All inhalants can produce sudden sniffing death syndrome.

• Liver — Halogenated compounds like trichloroethylene (a component of aerosol paints and correction fluid) have been linked to damage of this organ.

• Kidney — Inhalants containing toluene impair the kidney's ability to control the amount of acid in the blood. This is reversible when toluene leaves the body but, in the long-term, kidney stones may develop.

• Muscle — Chronic inhalant abuse can lead to muscle wasting, reduced muscle tone and strength.

• Bone marrow — Benzene, a

component of gasoline, has been shown to cause leukemia.

Additional damage caused by inhalants:

• Peripheral nervous system — Chronic inhalation of nitrous oxide (whipped cream propellant) and hexane (found in some glues and camp stove fuels) results in damage to the peripheral nerves. Symptoms can include numbness, a tingling sensation or total paralysis.

• Acoustic nerve and muscle — Toluene inhalation destroys cells that relay sound to the brain. Chronic abusers can become deaf.

## Sherman County donors help Kansas State Telefund raise over \$1.36 million

Kansas State University alumni and friends from Sherman County helped the university's all-volunteer telephone campaign for higher education mark its 25th anniversary by raising more than \$1.36 million.

Dubbed "The Original Lord of the R-R-Rings," Telefund 2004 received 26 pledges worth \$1,420

from Sherman County. The campaign received gifts from all 105 Kansas counties, all 50 states, Canada and Puerto Rico.

During 23 calling sessions in January and February, 1,596 students received 20,217 pledges worth \$1,361,657 to provide scholarships in nine academic colleges.

The Telefund pledge total first passed \$1 million in 1998.

Since 1980, Telefund has received 413,881 pledges worth \$18,447,454 for more than 20,000 volunteer student callers.

The ceremonial conclusion of Telefund 2004 is the Kellogg's Grand Prize Bash next Friday, when

seven randomly selected student callers will be honored. The top two prizes

are a new Nissan Xterra, provided by the Wichita Area Big Wheels, and a

\$1,000 Master Teacher/DeBruyn Family Scholarship.



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• 2001 John Deere 567, \$18,900, Goodland  
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