FULL KOLL

NITROUS OXIDE

Are you worried that your teenager is using nitrous oxide to get high?

This brochure is about nitrous oxide, also known as laughing gas, with information and support on how you can help your teenager.

Throughout the 2020s, nitrous oxide has become increasingly common as an intoxicant. Since 1 July 2025, the sale of nitrous oxide is regulated in Sweden. It is forbidden to sell to anyone under 18 and for intoxication purposes.

Many people think that nitrous oxide is harmless, but this isn't true. Anyone who uses nitrous oxide to get high risks serious damage to their nervous system and brain. The greatest risk with nitrous oxide is seen with repeated use. It's impossible to say how much nitrous oxide can be inhaled without it being dangerous as it varies from person to person. The more nitrous oxide a person inhales, the greater the risk of serious damage.

Länsstyrelserna

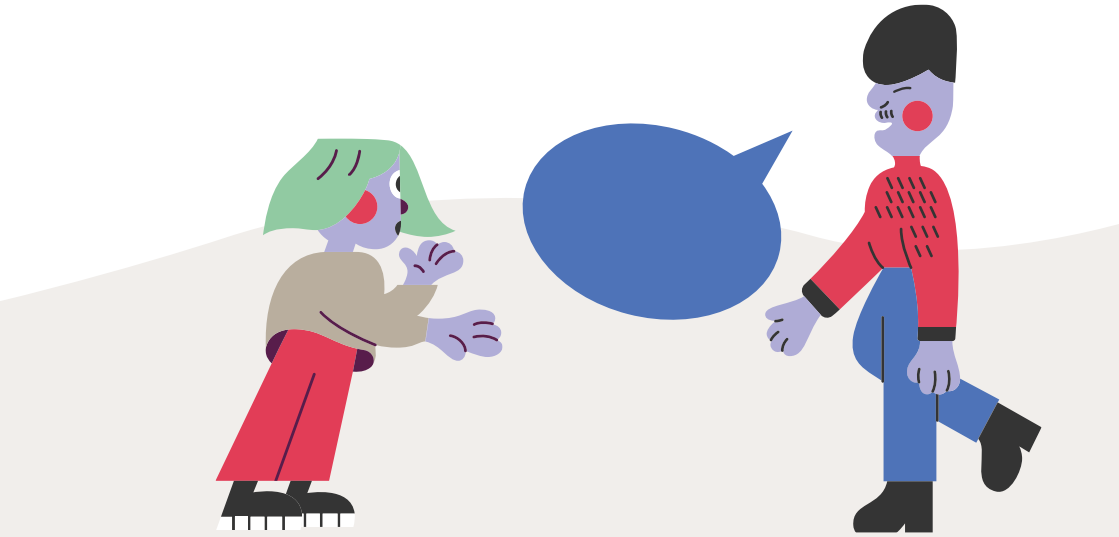
Good to know

- Nitrous oxide can be bought in small canisters intended for whipped cream dispensers. Since 1 July 2025, people over 18 are allowed to buy a maximum of two canisters at once, for culinary purposes. Nitrous oxide also used to be sold in larger cylinders, but these were banned from sale on 1 July 2025.
- Nitrous oxide is extremely cold when dispensed from its container, and this can cause frostbite in the mouth, oesophagus and airways.
- When nitrous oxide is used to get high, the gas is often inhaled directly from the canister or cylinder or by filling a balloon with nitrous oxide and then inhaling from the balloon.
- Nitrous oxide gives a 1–2 minute high that relaxes the person and causes them to giggle. It can also relieve pain and cause hallucinations.
- When a person inhales pure nitrous oxide, they don't get any oxygen. This can make them dizzy or faint.
- Nitrous oxide use can cause nerve damage with loss of sensation in the arms and legs, making it difficult to stand and walk. It can even cause mental health issues, including anxiety and cognitive impairment similar to dementia. It also increases the risk of blood clots.
- Nothing can be done preventively to make nitrous oxide less dangerous to inhale.
- The vast majority of students in year nine and the second year of upper secondary haven't used nitrous oxide. The percentage of youngsters who use nitrous oxide varies in different parts of Sweden.
- Nitrous oxide is a pharmaceutical used for pain relief within healthcare and is administered by trained personnel who determine the amount and strength.

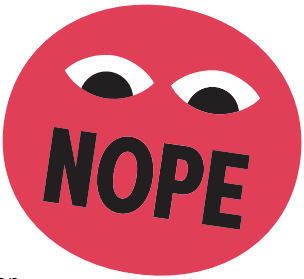
What can I do as a parent?

Try to talk about all aspects of everyday life. This makes it more natural to also talk about more difficult topics, such as alcohol, drugs or sex. Ask questions and listen. A close relationship has a protective effect.

- Because nitrous oxide gives a shorter high, you might not be able to tell from your child's behaviour that they've used nitrous oxide. However, there are other signs to look out for. Nitrous oxide canisters or cylinders together with balloons are a clear sign of nitrous oxide use.
- Set clear boundaries and explain why you think and feel the way you do.
- Try to explain what you're afraid will happen. It's good for a teenager to know that their parents care.
- Be prepared to listen and discuss. And be patient.
- It takes time to build a close relationship where you can talk about sensitive issues. Perhaps even more so with a teenager. Let it take as long as they need.
- Remember to get support from other parents or important adults in your circle. Together, you can decide on common ground rules and encourage each other.



You are important!
Your *no* is important!



- Full koll is here to help adults set boundaries for their teenager when it comes to alcohol and other drugs.
- We hope that facts and support will give you the confidence to say no – and stick to it.
- You can read more about building such a relationship and setting clear boundaries at **fullkoll.nu**.

Where can you turn to if you have questions or need help and support?

- The Poisons Information Centre can offer advice on and answer questions about nitrous oxide. Call 010-456 67 00 or visit giftinformation.se.
- You can also contact student health services at your child's school, your health centre or social services in your municipality.



Read more:

Fullkoll.nu
Giftinformation.se
1177.se
Drugsmart.se
Youmo.se

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County Administrative Boards of Sweden | Published: 2025 | Illustrations: Hugo Sandsjö