

NITROUS OXIDE

The Facts



**CLEVELAND
POLICE**

NITROUS OXIDE

- This is a psychoactive drug and is covered by the 2016 Psychoactive Substances Act, which means it's illegal to give away or sell.
- There's no penalty for possession, unless you're in prison.
- Supply and production can get you up to 7 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.
- **Also called:**
 - Balloons
 - Nos
 - Whippits
 - Laughing Gas
 - Hippie Crack
 - Chargers
 - Noz



NITROUS OXIDE



How it looks, tastes and smells

- **What does it look like?**
- A colourless gas that people inhale, usually via a balloon
- Nitrous oxide is a colourless gas that's most commonly found in pressurized metal canisters.
- You may have seen these metal canisters lying around in streets outside bars and nightclubs.
- **What does it taste/smell like?**
- Some people say that the gas has a slightly sweet smell and taste.
- **How do people take it?**
- Nitrous oxide is inhaled.
- People open the canister, transfer the gas into a container (usually a balloon), then inhale from the balloon.
- Inhaling nitrous oxide directly from the canister is very dangerous because the gas is under such high pressure. It can cause a spasm of the throat muscle and stop a person breathing.

NITROUS OXIDE



- **How does it make you feel?**
- Nitrous oxide slows down your brain and your body's responses, and the effects of the drug varies depending on how much has been inhaled.
- Taking nitrous oxide can cause:
 - feelings of euphoria, relaxation and calmness
 - fits of giggles and laughter – hence the nickname 'laughing gas'
 - sound distortions and hallucinations – when you see or hear things that aren't there
- Nitrous oxide can also:
 - give you a severe headache
 - cause dizziness
 - stop you thinking straight
 - cause short-lived but intense feelings of paranoia

NITROUS OXIDE



▪ Duration

- How long the effects last and the drug stays in your system depends on how much you've taken, your size, whether you've eaten and what other drugs you may have also taken.
- Nitrous oxide is often taken in combination with other drugs. So its effects can be unpredictable, as it depends on what other drugs are being taken with it.

▪ The risks

▪ **Physical health risks**

- It is very dangerous to inhale nitrous oxide directly from the canister, and doing it in an enclosed space is also very dangerous.
- Never place a plastic bag over your head.
- If you take too much nitrous oxide you risk falling unconscious and/or suffocating from the lack of oxygen. **People have died this way.**

NITROUS OXIDE



- **Other risks include:**
 - Dizziness, which might make you act carelessly or dangerously.
 - Heavy regular use of nitrous oxide can lead to a deficiency of vitamin B12 and to a form of anaemia. Severe B12 deficiency can lead to serious nerve damage, causing tingling and numbness in the fingers and toes. This can be very painful and make walking difficult.
 - Regular use can stop you forming white blood cells properly.
 - It can be hard to judge the amount to use safely. If you have too much you can end up fainting, having an accident or worse.

NITROUS OXIDE



- **Mixing**
- **Is it dangerous to mix with other drugs?**
- Yes. Every time you mix drugs you take on new risks.
- Mixing nitrous oxide with **alcohol** is especially dangerous as it can increase the risks associated with both substances and can lead to an increased risk of accidents.
- **Addiction**
- **Can you get addicted?**
- It may be possible to become psychologically dependent on nitrous oxide, meaning that users develop an increased desire to keep using it despite the harm it may cause, but the evidence on this is limited.
- In anecdotal reports, some people have reported developing cravings or feelings that they want to continue using nitrous oxide.

NITROUS OXIDE



- **The law**
- Class: Psychoactive Substances
- This is a psychoactive drug and is covered by the 2016 Psychoactive Substances Act, which means it's illegal to give away or sell.
- There's no penalty for possession, unless you're in prison.
- Supply and production can get you up to 7 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.
- Like drink-driving, driving when high is dangerous and illegal. If you're caught driving under the influence, you may receive a heavy fine, driving ban, or prison sentence.
- If the police catch people supplying illegal drugs in a home, club, bar or hostel, they can potentially prosecute the landlord, club owner or any other person concerned in the management of the premises.
- **Additional law details**
- As of 2016, nitrous oxide is covered by the Psychoactive Substances Act and is illegal to supply for its psychoactive effect.



Social media



How Accessable

Nitrous Oxide is also widely talked about and Distributed through Social media sites like:

- FACEBOOK WHATS APP TIK TOK
- SNAP CHAT INSTAGRAM HOUSEPARTY



NITROUS OXIDE



- **Worried about nitrous oxide use?**
- If you are worried about your use, you can call FRANK on [0300 1236600](tel:03001236600) for friendly, confidential advice.
- You can also contact Cleveland Police on 101 if you have any information relating to this subject.
- Or in case of emergency call 999

Need some friendly, confidential advice?

 **Call 0300 123 6600**

Call FRANK 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

[+ Call service details](#)

 **Text 82111**

Text a question and FRANK will text you back.

[+ Text service details](#)

 **Send an email**

Send an email and FRANK will message you back.

[+ Email service details](#)



● Live chat (offline)

Our live chat service operates from 2pm - 6pm, 7 days a week.