# Teen inhalant deaths prompt urgent calls for aerosol sale restrictions



Nicky Lowther's tragic death at just 13 years old has highlighted the alarming rise of 'chroming' among teenagers. Discovered unconscious in his home in Canterbury, Kent, on June 27 last year, Nicky succumbed to the effects of inhaling aerosol substances, a practice that has become increasingly prevalent particularly via social media platforms. His aunt, Toni Lowther, has since emerged as a voice for awareness, calling for parents to engage in frank discussions with their children about the dangers of this life-threatening trend.

Toni learned about Nicky's inhalation of aerosols only after arriving at the hospital following his death. "We found out he'd been inhaling aerosols but I didn't know the severity of it," she recounted. The discovery of 12 aerosol cans in his bedroom suggested a perilous routine that can lead to grave health consequences, a sentiment echoed by experts who warn that inhalants can indeed be fatal. The practice, colloquially known as 'huffing', entails inhaling the toxic chemicals found in everyday products to achieve a euphoric high, yet it carries substantial risks, including sudden death from cardiac arrest—a chilling outcome referred to as 'sudden sniffing death syndrome'.

The trend has gained traction particularly among young people, with instances of participants filming their inhalation experiences and sharing these via social media. In a related incident, an 11-year-old boy in the UK died after attempting this practice during a sleepover, while another case involved a 13-year-old girl in Australia who was largely unresponsive after similar inhalation. These events paint a concerning picture of a generational issue, driven partly by the allure of online validation.

Toni, deeply impacted by her nephew's passing, has launched a petition aimed at restricting the sale of aerosol products to minors. "Nicky's death was so preventable," she lamented, highlighting the missed milestones that his family will never witness, from graduation to marriage. The petition has garnered over 5,000 signatures, demonstrating a community rallying for change in the wake of tragedy.

Universally, experts are calling for heightened education surrounding the dangers of inhalants. Research indicates that inhalant abuse can inflict immediate health issues, including dizziness and cognitive impairment, with long-lasting repercussions for young users. Furthermore, as per various health sources, the anticipation for alluring outcomes can lead children to believe that these practices are safe and benign, an illusion that needs to be dispelled urgently.

Adding to the urgency, advocacy groups underscore the necessity for preventive measures to combat the normalisation of such behaviours. Community awareness campaigns and parental engagement are vital to ensuring children understand the risks they face when navigating social pressures that glorify harmful behaviour.

As Nicky's story reverberates through the community, it serves as a poignant reminder of the need for vigilance and proactive conversations about the perils of inhalant use. "Kids need to understand how dangerous it is," said Toni, urging her peers to initiate discussions about safety in what they perceive as harmless activities. The stark reality is that education and open dialogue are crucial to preventing further tragedies and protecting vulnerable young lives.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2. Paragraphs 3, 5
3. Paragraphs 4, 5
4. Paragraph 4
5. Paragraphs 4, 5
6. Paragraph 6
7. Paragraph 6

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25161642.family-issues-chroming-warning-teenage-son-dies/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://people.com/boy-dies-after-participating-in-trending-chroming-challenge-8606112> - An 11-year-old boy, Tommie-Lee Gracie Billington, died after inhaling fumes as part of a 'chroming' challenge during a sleepover. Chroming, also known as huffing, involves inhaling toxic chemicals from household products to achieve a high. The boy's family hopes his story will raise awareness of this dangerous trend. Experts warn that inhalant abuse can lead to serious health issues, including sudden death due to cardiac arrest. The incident highlights the growing concern over such challenges among teenagers.
3. <https://www.vumc.org/poison-control/toxicology-question-week/september-29-2023-viral-and-deadly-social-media-challenge-explained-what> - The Tennessee Poison Center discusses the dangers of 'chroming,' a trend where individuals inhale toxic chemicals from household products to achieve a high. The practice has gained popularity on platforms like TikTok, leading to serious health risks, including sudden sniffing death syndrome. The article emphasizes the importance of educating young people about the dangers of inhalant abuse and the need for preventive measures to combat this growing issue.
4. <https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/13-year-old-death-chroming-australia-flags-dangerous-social-media-trend-2385867-2023-05-29> - A 13-year-old Australian girl, Esra Haynes, died after inhaling deodorant fumes as part of the 'chroming' trend during a sleepover. Despite being on life support for eight days, doctors declared her brain damaged beyond repair. Her parents are now advocating for awareness and preventive measures to protect other children from this dangerous practice, which involves inhaling toxic substances for a quick high.
5. <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/what-is-chroming-the-dangerous-huffing-craze-threatening-the-lives-of-teens/LHQN5NHTFVGEDGXEVFP27CMIJY/> - The New Zealand Herald reports on the rising concern over 'chroming,' a dangerous trend where teenagers inhale toxic chemicals from products like deodorant to achieve a high. The article highlights the case of 13-year-old Esra Haynes, who died after participating in this trend. Experts warn of the severe health risks associated with chroming, including sudden death and long-term cognitive impairment, urging parents and communities to educate young people about these dangers.
6. <https://theconversation.com/chroming-choking-and-skull-breaking-social-media-challenges-can-come-with-deadly-consequences-236966> - The Conversation discusses the deadly consequences of social media challenges like 'chroming,' where individuals inhale toxic substances to get high. The article highlights several tragic incidents, including the death of 11-year-old Tommie-Lee Gracie Billington in the UK and 13-year-old Esra Haynes in Australia. Experts emphasize the importance of educating children and teens about the risks of such challenges to prevent further fatalities.
7. <https://adf.org.au/insights/inhalants-young-people/> - The Alcohol and Drug Foundation provides insights into the dangers of inhalant use among young people. The article explains how inhalants, such as aerosol sprays and paints, can cause immediate effects like dizziness and long-term issues like cognitive impairment. It also discusses the phenomenon of 'sudden sniffing death,' where inhalant use can lead to fatal cardiac arrest, underscoring the importance of prevention and education.