



Nottingham
Recovery
Network

Drug & Alcohol Support in Nottingham

Nitrous Oxide (NOS)

What is it?

A colourless, virtually odourless gas.

A dissociative anaesthetic. NOS has been used in medicine for centuries. It separates the mind from the pain that the body may be experiencing. Is used commonly in dentistry and during childbirth, but also used for making whipped cream.

It is most often sold in small pressurised silver canisters, although you can get it in larger canisters and tanks.

Since November 2023, possession of NOS has been illegal in the UK.

Repeat serious users of NOS could face up to 2 years in prison and dealers up to 14 years

Effects

Effects include euphoria, laughing, lack of coordination, dissociation and hallucinations.

It comes on virtually straightaway and will last only a few minutes.



Harm Reduction

There are a few things to think about when using recreationally:

- Inhale from a balloon. The gas is under less pressure, reducing the risk of breathing difficulties. It also warms up the gas, lowering the risk of asphyxiation and burns to the mouth and throat.
- Take breaths of air between breaths of NOS, so that the brain is not starved of oxygen. Lack of oxygen can cause brain damage or suffocation.
- NOS affects coordination so to avoid injury it is best used sitting down.
- Avoid using if you are pregnant or have a serious medical condition.
- Regular use can deplete vitamin B12. This is essential for a number of important actions including healthy nerve and brain function.
- NOS may cause nausea, vomiting, headaches and disorientation if you take a lot in a short space of time or use with alcohol.
- Never use on your own.
- Always dispose of the silver canisters responsibly. If using at festivals and in parks, do not leave them littering the ground.

Get in touch to find out more

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