

# Nassau limits sale of 'whip-its,' nitrous oxide cartridges



More than 1,200 Americans died from nitrous oxide poisoning between 2010 and 2023. Credit: Getty Images/Matt Cardy

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Nassau lawmakers voted unanimously on Monday to [restrict the sale of nitrous oxide](#) cartridges known as "whip-its" or "laughing gas."

Millions of Americans each year get high using the gas, commonly found in whipped cream canisters and legally sold at vape shops, convenience stores, gas stations and online. Inhaling the chemical compound can cause paralysis, disabling neurological damage, [loss of the ability to walk and even death](#).

As of 2021, it is illegal in New York State to sell the products to people under 21. Nassau's local law will complement that by making it illegal for retailers to sell the products anywhere that isn't a licensed food business.

Local retailers must verify a company's food license before selling the nitrous oxide canisters. Selling the products elsewhere is now a misdemeanor crime

punishable with a fine of \$1,000, 1 year in jail or both. Selling to a minor increases the fine by \$500 and repeat offenders will be fined \$2,500 for each additional violation.

The canisters are marketed to young people with names like Galaxy Gas, adorned with bright colors and flavors like tropical punch and strawberry cream. A trend of inhaling the gas became so popular on TikTok that the social media app banned the search term "nitrous oxide."

"What really got my attention is how and where these items are being sold. In my own district, these canisters — supposedly to be sold to chefs, restaurants and bakeries — are being sold at smoke shops," said Rose Walker, chair of the legislature's Health and Social Services Committee, who introduced the bill.

The Federal Drug Administration last year warned Americans [against abusing the canisters](#), which are also used in restaurants as a foaming agent to make whipped cream and mousses.

"It's a problem that's ravaging our young adults," said Jeffrey Friedman, CEO of CN Guidance & Counseling Services, a Hicksville mental health services nonprofit. "Our clinicians, crisis team and emergency partners are increasingly encountering individuals who present in acute psychotic states or medical crises using nitrous oxide products."

Young people are using the party drug not only in small chargers, about 8 grams in size, but also in larger canisters "about 40 times the usual culinary-application size," said Irina Gelman, the county's health commissioner.

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Haleh Brown, a Jericho mother, said she lost her 34-year-old son Nima in 2024 to the gas. His struggle with drug addiction began with marijuana at the age of 14, and he spent the next two decades fighting to get sober, making various trips to rehabilitation centers, she said.

In the Spring of 2024, "I finally saw a change in him," Brown said. "He was holding a job ... going to his meetings, and heading toward sobriety."

But by the fall, his behavior changed rapidly. "He became moody, deeply depressed ... Increasingly disconnected from reality," she continued.

The mother of two began to observe Nima's "severe cognitive decline," she said. "He began sharing stories that never happened ... Eventually, he couldn't respond even to basic questions."

Nima's family didn't know he was using nitrous oxide, Brown said, as the gas does not appear in drug tests.

On Nov. 29, 2024, Nima was found surrounded by nitrous oxide canisters. "He died in his car right in front of the smoke shop where he purchased the gas," she said.

"No parent should ever have to experience that heartbreak. My mission now is to make sure Nima's story protects others."

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