

## MOM WITH SECRET ADDICTION IS PLAYING DANGEROUS GAME

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DEAR ABBY: I'm a 17-year-old girl and I caught my mom sniffing nail polish remover. She obviously doesn't want me to know because she tries to hide it. I don't know what to do. I don't know why she would want to do this. It's something people MY age would do. I know better than to do that. Should I talk to her about it? She'll probably make up some excuse like she likes the smell. She sometimes tells me I need to grow up because I can act silly. But honestly, SHE is the one who needs to grow up. I want to help her because I know what she's doing is not good for her. But how? -KNOWS HER SECRET IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR KNOWS: Your mother may have an acetone addiction. Because you can't convince her to take your concerns seriously, tell another adult ASAP what's going on - a relative, your father if he's in the picture, a teacher or counselor at school. This kind of inhalant addiction is serious because in high concentrations, acetone is a nervous system depressant. This means it can slow a person's heartbeat, respiration and metabolism, causing a person to become dizzy, confused and pass out. It can also damage the vital organs - the heart, liver, kidneys and the bone marrow - and cause cardiac arrest and death. A support group for the children of addicts, such as Alateen, could give you emotional support. To find one, visit [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org).