

# Laughing Gas to Be Considered Hard Drug

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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If you're getting high off of laughing gas because you think it's legal in Russia, now's the time to stop. The drug will soon be considered a Class II psychotropic, joining cocaine and morphine, a deputy head of the Federal Drug Control Service said Thursday.

Nikolai Tsvetkov told Interfax that he "hoped" nitrous oxide, in a concentration above 90 percent, would be considered a "narcotic" within the "coming weeks."

If you sell nitrous oxide-filled balloons to your friends without a license, you could face up to a decade in prison under Penal Code Article 238, according to a Federal Consumer Protection Service [statement](#) Wednesday.

Unauthorized sale of the drug is currently considered a misdemeanor.

Police picked up a man last month for selling laughing gas outside a sports complex

in Tambov, some 500 kilometers southeast of Moscow, the drug control service said in a [statement](#).

"Recently, authorities have been receiving complaints of young people being poisoned with so-called 'happy gas,'" the statement said.

Nitrous oxide, when inhaled in small concentrations, creates a mild euphoria. It is used for medical purposes as an anesthetic.

But, the drug control service warned, if concentrations are acute, laughing gas can cause "temporary amnesia, emotional instability, gradual atrophy of the brain and spinal cord ... and even death."

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