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http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/general_facts/index.htm

There is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure; even brief exposure can be harmful to health.^{1,3,4}

Overview of secondhand smoke

Second hand smoke harms children and adults, and the only way to fully protect nonsmokers is to eliminate smoking in all homes, worksites and public places.

- Smoke from a burning tobacco product such as a cigarette, cigar, or pipe^{1,2}
- Smoke that has been exhaled or breathed out by the person or people smoking²
- More than 7,000 chemicals, including hundreds that are toxic and about 70 that can cause cancer¹

Where does secondhand smoke exposure occur?

You can be exposed to secondhand smoke in the home, work, vehicles, restaurants, bars, casinos, & multiunit housing.³

- An estimated 88 million nonsmokers in the United States were exposed to secondhand smoke in 2007–2008.⁵
- Children are at particular risk for exposure to secondhand smoke: 53.6% of young children (aged 3–11 years) were exposed to secondhand smoke in 2007–2008.⁵
- Among children who live in homes in which no one smokes inside, those who live in multiunit housing have 45% higher cotinine levels compared to those who live in detached homes.⁶ (When the body metabolizes nicotine, cotinine is a nicotine byproduct.)

How do you protect yourself and your family from secondhand smoke?

The only way to protect yourself is to eliminate smoking indoors.³ Separating smokers from nonsmokers within the same air space, cleaning the air, opening windows, and ventilating buildings does not eliminate secondhand smoke exposure.³

Four Myths of Secondhand Smoke⁷

#1: The Distance Myth

People who smoke around their kids commonly believe that secondhand smoke can't harm their kids if "enough distance" separates their kids from the cigarette smoke. When it comes to the distance between secondhand smoke and your kids, how far away is far enough?



The Truth: When you (or anyone else) smoke in your home or in your car, there is no safe distance between the smoke and your kids. No matter where a cigarette is smoked in your home, the entire house ends up sharing the air. The only way to protect kids from secondhand smoke is to make sure cigarettes, cigars, and pipes are always smoked outside the home and outside the car. There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Parents can protect their kids by keeping their homes and cars 100 percent smoke-free and never smoking around them.

Protecting your kids from secondhand smoke takes only One Step: Always step outside the home and the car before smoking, and away from your kids and others.

#2 The Odor Myth

I use an air freshener to make the air clean after I smoke. If you can't smell the smoke in the air, then it's gone, right?

The Truth: Many of the dangerous chemicals found in smoke have no odor, so it's hard to tell if they're in the air. These chemicals can stay in the air for up to three hours after a cigarette is put out, and they can stick to fabrics like clothes, furniture, and carpet for weeks. Trying to cover up the odor of secondhand smoke with an air freshener doesn't help either. Even if someone can't smell secondhand smoke, they may still be breathing its poisonous toxins. Putting out a cigarette before kids get home doesn't actually protect them from being exposed to the chemicals in secondhand smoke. The only way to protect kids from secondhand smoke is to always smoke outside the home and outside the car.

Protecting your kids from secondhand smoke takes only One Step: Always step outside the home and the car before smoking, and away from your kids and others.

#3 The Ventilation Myth

My house has a good ventilation system. Opening a window or turning on a fan will clear the air of smoke, right?

The Truth: Unfortunately, opening a window or turning on a fan can't completely remove the poisonous chemicals in secondhand smoke from the air. In fact, not even the most expensive air cleaning systems are able to clear the air of all poisons in secondhand smoke. Ventilating secondhand smoke does not do enough to protect kids. The only way to protect kids from secondhand smoke is to always smoke outside the home and outside the car.

Protecting your kids from secondhand smoke takes only One Step: Always step outside the home and the car before smoking, and away from your kids and others.

#4 The Quit Myth

If it's not enough to smoke in another room, open windows, and get rid of the odor, then my only other option is to quit, right?

The Truth: While quitting smoking is the only way to completely protect kids from secondhand smoke in the home and car, there is another step you can take: stepping outside every time you smoke.

Protecting your kids from secondhand smoke takes only One Step: Always step outside the home and the car before smoking, and away from your kids and others.



Health Effects of secondhand smoke exposure

Overall, since 1964, 2.5 million nonsmokers have died from exposure to secondhand smoke.¹

In children, secondhand smoke causes the following:^{1,3}

- Ear infections
- More frequent and severe asthma attacks
- Respiratory symptoms (e.g., coughing, sneezing, shortness of breath)
- Respiratory infections (i.e., bronchitis, pneumonia)
- A greater risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)

In adults who have never smoked, secondhand smoke can cause:

- Cardiovascular disease, including increased risk of heart attack^{1,3}, heart disease³, and stroke.¹
- Lung cancer.^{1,5}

Secondhand smoke from THC/Marijuana

Secondhand smoke tobacco has the same physical and chemical make-up as from marijuana smoke, minus the active ingredients. Recent research with rats indicate that exposure to secondhand smoke from marijuana may have the same harmful effects to cardiovascular system as tobacco smoke.⁸

Additional Resources

- Colorado QuitLine
1.800.Quit.Now (784.8669) www.coquitline.org
- Become an Ex
<http://www.becomeanex.org/>
- Raise Smoke Free Kids
<http://www.raisesmokefreekids.com/>
- Smoke Free Colorado
<http://www.smokefreecolorado.org/main.html>References

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4. Institute of Medicine. [Secondhand Smoke Exposure and Cardiovascular Effects: Making Sense of the Evidence](#) [PDF–707.47 KB]. Washington: National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine, 2009 [accessed 2014 Apr 11].
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6. Wilson KM,, Klein JD, Blumkin AK, Gottlieb M, Winickoff JP. [Tobacco Smoke Exposure in Children Who Live in Multiunit Housing](#). [PDF–575 KB] Pediatrics 2011;127(1):85-92 [accessed 2014 Apr 11].
7. Raisesmokefreekids.com
8. Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education. <https://tobacco.ucsf.edu/secondhand-marijuana-smoke-may-damage-blood-vessels-much-tobacco-smoke>

