

SECONDHAND SMOKE & HEALTH



What is Secondhand Smoke?

- Secondhand smoke is a mix of sidestream smoke (the smoke released from the burning end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar) and mainstream smoke (the smoke exhaled by the smoker).¹

Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke

- The U.S. Surgeon General stated that secondhand smoke causes disease and death in children and adults.
- There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Even a little secondhand smoke can be harmful.²
- Secondhand smoke causes about 3,400 lung cancer deaths and 46,000 heart disease deaths.^{2,4}
- At least 250 chemicals in secondhand smoke are known to be toxic or cancer causing. In 2000, the National Institute of Health (NIH) listed secondhand smoke as a known human carcinogen (cancer-causing agent).^{2,3}

Secondhand Smoke and Children

- Infants and young children are the most affected by the chemicals in secondhand smoke. Exposure is linked to a higher risk for asthma, middle-ear infections, bronchitis, and pneumonia.^{2,4}
- Pregnant women who are exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to have babies with lower birth weights, weaker lungs, and a greater chance of dying from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).²
- The EPA estimates that 200,000 to 1,000,000 children have their asthma condition made worse by exposure to secondhand smoke.⁵
- Children are also susceptible to third-hand smoke. Third-hand smoke is the mix of toxins and chemicals that stays on carpets, clothes, hair, curtains, or other materials long after a cigarette is put out.⁶



How Can Smoke-Free Environments Help?

- According to a 2007 Bureau of Labor Statistics study, people spend more time in their homes than at any other place.
- The home is where children are most exposed to secondhand smoke. It is also a major location of secondhand smoke exposure for adults.²
- The only way to fully protect yourself and your loved ones from the dangers of secondhand smoke is through 100% smoke-free environments. Separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings cannot completely eliminate secondhand smoke.²

1. Health Effects of Exposure to Secondhand Smoke. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Available at <http://www.epa.gov/smokefree/healtheffects.html>.
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006.
3. National Institutes of Health. The National Toxicology Program's 9th Report on Carcinogens Available at www.nih.gov/news/pr/may2000/niehs-15.htm
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses—United States, 2000–2004. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5745a3.htm>.
5. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Respiratory Health Effects of Passive Smoking: Lung Cancer and Other Disorders. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1992. Available at: <http://cfpub2.epa.gov/ncea/cfm/recordisplay.cfm?deid=2835>. Accessed December 2, 2009.
6. Rabin, Roni. "A New Cigarette Hazard: Third-Hand Smoke." NY Times, January 2, 2009.



Franklin County Board of Health