



## Secondhand Smoke Affects Everyone Exposed

Cigarette smoke affects your health. When you smoke, you don't smoke alone. It affects the health of all of those around you, too. It affects everyone who is near you while you smoke. This can be your family (especially children),<sup>1</sup> friends, passersby, and pets.<sup>2</sup>

### Secondhand smoke is smoke that<sup>2</sup>:

- Is exhaled by a smoker, or
- Comes from a burning cigarette, cigar, or pipe

Secondhand smoke is thought of as passive or involuntary.<sup>2</sup> That means those that get the chemicals and health risks that come from it have not made the choice to do so.

### The impact of secondhand smoke

After they are exposed to this secondhand smoke, nonsmokers will have smoking-related chemicals in their bodies.<sup>3</sup>

### Although they are nonsmokers, these chemicals may have the following effects over time<sup>2</sup>:

- Coughing and chest discomfort
- Reduced lung function
- Pneumonia and bronchitis
- Asthma and ear infections
- Heart disease
- Lung cancer
- Early death and disease

Any exposure to secondhand smoke is not safe. It should be avoided.<sup>2</sup> Just like with smoking, the more exposure to chemicals in tobacco, the greater the risks.<sup>2</sup>

### Quit for yourself and others

The good news is that it's never too late to stop smoking. There are so many reasons to quit smoking. Do it for your health. Do it for the money you'll save. Do it for your family. Do it for those around you. Talk to your doctor. Set your quit date. Make it happen.

**References:**

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2. American Cancer Society. Secondhand smoke. [http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED\\_10\\_2X\\_Secondhand\\_Smoke-Clean\\_Indoor\\_Air.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_10_2X_Secondhand_Smoke-Clean_Indoor_Air.asp). Accessed March 26, 2008.
3. National Cancer Institute. Secondhand smoke: questions and answers.  
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