



Going Smoke Free

Secondhand Smoke Facts

Everyone knows that smoking is harmful, but many people do not realize that secondhand smoke can also be extremely harmful to the health of non-smokers as well. Most exposure to secondhand smoke occurs in the home and workplace and can cause many long-lasting and debilitating illnesses or make breathing problems worse, especially in infants, children and older persons.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Secondhand smoke – the smoke from the end of a burning cigarette, cigar or pipe, or the smoke that has been breathed out by the person or people smoking it – contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including hundreds that are toxic and about 70 that can cause cancer.

In children, secondhand smoke causes the following¹:

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

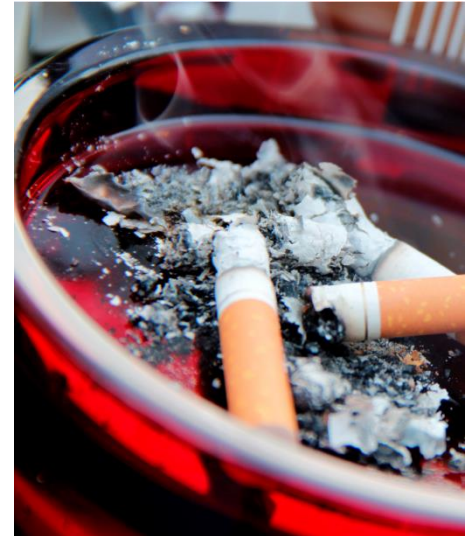


Photo Provided by CDC/ Debora Cartagena

In adults who have never smoked, secondhand smoke can cause heart disease and/or lung cancer.

Heart Disease

- For nonsmokers, breathing secondhand smoke has immediate harmful effects on the cardiovascular system that can increase the risk for heart attack. People who already have heart disease are at especially high risk.^{1,2}
- Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work increase their heart disease risk by 25–30%.¹
- Secondhand smoke exposure causes an estimated 46,000 heart disease deaths annually among adult nonsmokers in the United States.³

Lung Cancer

- Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work increase their lung cancer risk by 20–30%.¹
- Secondhand smoke exposure causes an estimated 3,400 lung cancer deaths annually among adult nonsmokers in the United States.³

The U.S. Surgeon General stated in a 2006 report, “There is no safe risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.”

