

Secondhand smoke is the third leading preventable cause of death.

# Tobacco **FACT** Sheet

[www.tobaccoprevention.org](http://www.tobaccoprevention.org)

## Secondhand smoke

Secondhand smoke, also known as environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), is the smoke given off by the burning end of a cigarette, pipe or cigar and the smoke exhaled from smokers. It can cause illness or worsen existing health problems including cancer, respiratory infections, and asthma.

Secondhand smoke has been classified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a known cause of cancer in humans (Group A carcinogen). This means that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

If you are a smoker:

- Smoke outside. Do not permit others to smoke in your house, apartment or car.
- Wear “smoking clothes” that you take off when you come inside after smoking. It is also a good idea to leave the jacket outside if possible.
- If you are with children, avoid places that allow smoking.

What's actually in the smoke?

Tobacco smoke contains over 4000 chemicals, over 40 of which can cause cancer.

The 2006 US Surgeon General's report also states that:

- Secondhand smoke causes premature death and disease in children and in adults who do not smoke.
- Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), acute respiratory infections, ear problems, and more severe asthma. Smoking by parents causes respiratory symptoms and slows lung growth in their children.
- Exposure of adults to secondhand smoke has immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and causes coronary heart disease and lung cancer.
- The scientific evidence indicates that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Many millions of Americans, both children and adults, are still exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes and workplaces despite substantial progress in tobacco control.
- Eliminating smoking in indoor spaces fully protects nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke. Separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings cannot eliminate exposures of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke.

### **Five tips for quitting**

*Studies have shown that these five steps will help you quit and quit for good. You have the best chances of quitting if you use these five steps to develop and maintain your own quit plan.*

1. *Get ready.*
2. *Get support.*
3. *Learn new skills and behaviors.*
4. *Get medication and use it correctly.*
5. *Be prepared for difficult situations.*

*Talk to your health care provider, they can help. If you do not have insurance or just need to talk call the Washington Tobacco Quitline:*

**1-877-270-7876**

*For Spanish call*

**1-877-2NO Fume**

*Visit the Quitline website:*

**[www.quitline.com](http://www.quitline.com)**

*We also recommend:*

[www.secondhandsmokesyou.com](http://www.secondhandsmokesyou.com)

[www.cdc.gov/tobacco](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco)