

Secondhand smoke: Protecting your family

What is secondhand smoke?

Secondhand smoke is the smoke given off by the burning end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar, as well as the smoke exhaled from the lungs of smokers. Tobacco smoke contains:

- 4,000 chemicals.
- 200 poisons.
- 50 cancer-causing agents.

Secondhand smoke stays in the air even after the tobacco is gone. You can be exposed to it even if someone smokes in another room in the house, opens a window, or turns on a fan. **There is no safe level of inhaled tobacco smoke.**

Why is it a problem?

Secondhand smoke kills.

People who breathe in second-hand smoke are more likely to develop heart disease and cancer. Second-hand smoke has also been linked to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Secondhand smoke makes kids sick.

Children exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to:

- get asthma.
- have more ear infections.
- get bronchitis and pneumonia.
- wheeze and cough.
- smoke as adolescents.

What should I do?

- Make your home and car smoke-free and put up **no smoking** signs.
- Tell people not to smoke in your home or car.
- Make sure children's day care and after-school programs are smoke-free.
- Eat at smoke-free restaurants.

If you smoke:

- **Never smoke around children!**
- Do not smoke in the home or car.
- If you smoke, go outside to do it. Wear a smoking jacket and leave it outside, so you don't bring in smoke particles on your clothes.
- Quitting smoking is likely to be the single most important health decision you make for you and your child.

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. For questions or for help to quit smoking, these resources are available:

- your doctor.
- Minnesota Tobacco Helpline
1-888-354-PLAN (1-888-354-7526).
- American Lung Association
1-800-LUNGUSA, www.lungusa.org.
- American CA Society
1 800 ACS 2345 www.cancer.org.