



The Harmful Effects of Secondhand Smoke

What is Secondhand Smoke?

- Secondhand Smoke is the smoke you inhale from someone else's smoking. Also called Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS), the Environmental Protection Agency has determined that Secondhand Smoke causes cancer in humans and that there is no safe level of exposure.

How harmful is Secondhand Smoke?

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. 1992. "Respiratory Health Effects of Passive Smoking: Lung Cancer and Other Disorders" unless otherwise noted.

- Secondhand Smoke has twice the amount of tar and nicotine than in the smoke inhaled through a filtered cigarette.
- About 3,000 non-smokers a year die from lung cancer caused by secondhand smoke.
- About 37,000 non-smokers a year die from heart disease attributed to secondhand smoke.
- In children, exposure to secondhand smoke is linked to increased bronchitis, pneumonia, other respiratory infections, chronic ear infections and asthma.
- A non-smoker married to a heavy smoker has double the risk of lung cancer than one married to a non-smoker. *Journal of the American Medical Association 271(22) 1994.*
- Non-smokers who work in places with secondhand smoke have an increased risk of heart disease.
- The risk of lung cancer for workers, like bartenders and waitresses, in establishments that allow smoking is 25 - 75% greater than in the general population. The risk can triple, depending on the number of years of work. *International Journal of Cancer 93, 2001.*

The Immediate Harms of Secondhand Smoke

While most people think of cancer when they think of smoking, heart disease is an important consequence of tobacco smoke exposure. Unlike lung cancer, the effects of smoking on the cardiovascular system occur rapidly.

- Just 30 minutes of exposure to secondhand smoke compromises the coronary artery function of healthy non-smokers. *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) 286(4), July 25, 2001*



For information call the
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