



## SECONDHAND SMOKE

### Fact Sheet

- Secondhand smoke comes from two places: smoke breathed out by the person who smokes, and smoke from the end of a burning cigarette. Secondhand smoke causes or exacerbates a wide range of adverse health effects, including cancer, respiratory infections, and asthma.
- Secondhand smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals; 200 are poisons; 43 cause cancer. Secondhand smoke has been classified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a known cause of cancer in humans (Group A carcinogen).
- Secondhand smoke causes lung cancer and other health problems. The EPA estimates that secondhand smoke causes approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths and 37,000 heart disease deaths in nonsmokers each year.
- Secondhand smoke is especially harmful to young children. EPA estimates that secondhand smoke is responsible for between 150,000 and 300,000 lower respiratory tract infections in infants and children under 18 months of age annually, resulting in between 7,500 and 15,000 hospitalizations each year.
- Secondhand smoke is harmful to children with asthma. The EPA estimates that for between 200,000 and one million asthmatic children, exposure to secondhand smoke worsens their condition.
- Secondhand smoke can make healthy children less than 18 months of age sick; it can cause pneumonia, ear infections, bronchitis, coughing, wheezing and increased mucus production. According to the EPA, secondhand smoke can lead to the buildup of fluid in the middle ear, the most common cause of hospitalization of children for an operation.

Individuals can take several steps to reduce their exposure to secondhand smoke, including:

- If you smoke, quit!
- Keep smoke away from you and your family by asking people not to smoke in your home.
- Make sure your child's day care site and school are smoke-free.
- Use no-smoking signs, buttons and stickers at home, at work, and in your car.
- Eat in smoke-free environments.
- Seek a smoke-free worksite.
- Support clean air laws that protect you from secondhand smoke.

For more information call the American Lung Association at 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872), or visit our web site at <http://www.lungusa.org>.

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