

What are the health risks due to exposure to tobacco smoke?

- Tobacco smoke can cause heart disease and lung cancer in nonsmokers.
- Tobacco smoke pollution is the third leading cause of preventable death in this country, killing 53,000 nonsmokers in the U.S. each year.
- Exposure to tobacco smoke also may cause cataracts or eye disease, early menopause in women and worsens asthmatic conditions.
- Exposure to tobacco smoke causes irritation of the eye, nose and throat, as well as the lungs, leading to coughing, excess phlegm, chest discomfort, and reduced lung function.

Tobacco smoke is a serious health risk to children.

- The developing lungs of young children are also adversely affected by exposure to tobacco smoke.
- Infants and young children whose parents smoke are among the most seriously affected by exposure to secondhand smoke, being at increased risk of lower respiratory tract infections such as pneumonia and bronchitis.
- EPA estimates that passive smoking 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.
- Asthmatic children are especially at risk. EPA estimates that exposure to tobacco smoke increase the number of episodes and severity of symptoms in hundreds of thousands of asthmatic children. EPA estimates that 200,000-1,000,000 asthmatic children have their condition made worse by exposure to secondhand smoke. Non-asthmatic children may develop the condition through tobacco smoke exposure.

How to protect children

- Do not smoke in your home or permit other to do so.
- Do not smoke if children are present, particularly infants and toddlers.
- Do not smoke in the car. The high concentration of smoke in a small, closed compartment substantially increases the exposure to other passengers. Opening windows will not allow all the toxins to escape, exposing small children to tobacco smoke.
- Do not sit in smoking sections of restaurants.

Coalition for a Smoke Free Valley

For more information about the Tobacco Control Program or about upcoming tobacco education and outreach initiatives please contact the

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