



QuitPack News

Vol. 1 No. 7

May 2006

Welcome to the 6th edition of the QuitPack News. This monthly newsletter helps us keep in touch with Yukoners who are moving toward becoming smoke-free with the help of a QuitPack. Here's how you can use this newsletter:

- Send in your comments about the QuitPack for us to share in upcoming newsletters— likes, dislikes, articles you'd like to see, etc.
 - Let us know **your** tips for others as they try to quit.
 - Suggest articles you'd like to see in the next issue.
- We look forward to hearing from you!

The Staff at Health Promotion



The Secret Life of Second-hand Smoke

Many smokers are aware that their smoking also affects the people around them whether they are smokers or not. Each cigarette that is lit and smoked creates a health hazard known as environmental tobacco smoke or second-hand smoke.

There are two types of second-hand smoke:

Mainstream smoke is the smoke that goes through the cigarette's filter *and* the smoker's lungs before it is exhaled;



Sidestream smoke is the unfiltered smoke that comes from the end of a burning cigarette.

Both types of second-hand smoke are inhaled by everyone in that area, and contain the same chemicals that are inhaled by a smoker. These are the same

chemicals found in products such as paint strippers, white ant poison and the tar used to pave roads. Fifty of them are known to cause cancer. Because side-stream smoke is not filtered when it comes off the end of a burning cigarette, it contains *two times* more tar and *five times* more carbon monoxide than the smoke inhaled by smokers.

Although second-hand smoke is diluted in the air, prolonged and repeated exposure can still be harmful to people who do not smoke.

The more people are exposed to second-hand smoke, the more their health is at risk. Second-hand smoke is responsible for the deaths of about 1,000 non-smokers in Canada each year.

About 100 children less than a year old will die from exposure to cigarette smoke this year.

How can you protect your loved ones? See page 2.

Sitting in a non-smoking area in a restaurant or going into another room to avoid second-hand smoke does not protect people from its harmful – even life-threatening effects.

Smoke slips through cracks and is carried on clothes and the skin. Many of the harmful chemicals in second-hand smoke are in the air long after the smoke and smell are gone. These chemicals cling to furniture, carpets, clothes and toys. They can also linger in walls for as long as two years. Yellowing walls in a house or car are signs of the chemicals in cigarette smoke. Cleaning furniture, carpets, clothing, toys and walls does not necessarily remove the harmful chemicals.

Candles and air fresheners may cover up the smoke smell but do not take away the chemicals. Stove fans, air filters and air purifiers may remove some particles, but not those that have already settled on furniture or other surfaces.

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Even "smoking rooms" don't always work. To be effective, smoking rooms must be fully enclosed and have a separate ventilation system.

The short-term effects of breathing in second-hand smoke include eye irritation, headache, cough, sore throat, nausea, dizziness, and increased heart rate and blood pressure. People who inhale second-hand smoke over a long

time have a reduced ability to take in oxygen. Other long-term effects include increased blood pressure, risk of blood clots and lung cancer.

Second-hand smoke has the same effect on children, but because children's lungs are smaller, they breathe faster and take in more harmful chemicals than adults. Children who breathe in second-hand smoke are more likely to get respiratory or lung infections because children are less able than adults to fight off infections. Children can also develop asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, lung cancer and heart disease. Second-hand smoke may play a role in crib death.

Protecting yourself, your family and friends from Second-hand Smoke (*con't. from page 1*)

The best choice is to quit, but that's not easy. Nicotine is a powerful and addictive drug, so when you decide to quit, ask your family and friends for help. You can also get help from a doctor, a nurse at the health centre, or a pharmacist.

Sometimes it's hard to make big changes or life itself may be too difficult to even consider quitting. If this is true for you right now, there are steps you can take to protect your family and friends from the effects of SHS until you are ready to quit. Here are some tips to help reduce the second hand smoke that you and your family breathe in.

✓ **Make your home and car "smoke-free zones"**

where no one is allowed to smoke. Make sure that every person who lives with you is involved in making this decision. Most people find it harder to break a commitment they helped make. Take ashtrays out of your house

and car – the sight of an ashtray can be a trigger to light up. Smokers usually look for a place to put ashes before they light up. If ashtrays are not in sight, they think twice about smoking. Arrange a smoking area outside and use a can filled with sand or gravel for butts. Although it may be hard to ask your friends and family not to smoke in your home or car, it's about keeping the ones you love healthy. You may need to help people understand the importance of reducing second-hand smoke. Be polite but firm with smokers who want to light-up in your home. Stick to your rules – it's your house - but remember to thank your family and guests for helping to keep your home smoke-free.



If you can't curb an urge to smoke while you are driving, stop the car and smoke outside. It may take you longer to get where you want to go, but it's only a few minutes. The car is a confined space, so there is less air to dilute the smoke. Less dilution means that you and your family will breathe in more second-hand smoke.

✓ **Limit smoking to one room in the house.** Sometimes it is not possible to go outside to smoke (for example, you may not be able to leave young children alone). Pick a room that your children don't use to be the smoking room. It should have a window to the outside. Making it uninviting will ensure that your children don't want to be in it. Smoke in this room only (and ask your friends and family who smoke to do the same). Keep all your ashtrays and lighters there as well. When you have a cigarette, keep the door closed and the window open until you finished your smoke. If you put a fan behind you, it will blow smoke out the open window. **This is the best choice if you can't go outside.**

Please send your comments & suggestions for next month's QuitPack News to health.promotion@gov.yk.ca or call the Smokersline toll-free 1-866-221-8393.

✓ **Reduce how much you smoke indoors.**

Delay smoking a cigarette until your children have left the house or until you can go outside to smoke. Avoid smoking inside within *three hours* of your children returning home from daycare or school. For example, if your child comes home at 3 p.m., don't smoke inside after 12:00 noon.

✓ **Ask people not to smoke around your kids.**

✓ **If you're pregnant** avoid smoking or seriously cut down and avoid smoke-filled rooms because second-hand smoke affects the growing fetus.

✓ **Respect others' request when they ask you not to smoke in their home or car.** People

around you may be concerned about your health and their own. If they ask you not to smoke inside, be considerate and go outside to smoke.



But you still need to be careful. If children are close by, make sure the smoke isn't blowing towards them.

✓ **Allow your children to remind you to smoke outside or in your smoking room.** Let them remind you to never smoke in the car. By allowing your kids to be assertive, they will develop the skills and the confidence to better protect themselves in other harmful situations (for example, when they are being bullied).

✓ **Reward yourself for taking steps to protect your family from second-hand smoke.** It's hard work! Remember every step counts - start with small changes and build on them.

