

What you should know about

The Dangers of Second-hand Smoke

Scientific studies have proven that second-hand smoke is harmful to non-smokers and smokers alike, especially when they are exposed to high levels of smoke.

Did you know?

- Second-hand smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals,¹ including:
 - carbon monoxide – the deadly gas that comes out of your car's tailpipe,
 - formaldehyde – a chemical used to preserve dead animals,
 - arsenic – a chemical used to kill bugs and weeds,
 - ammonia – a chemical used to clean dirty floors and toilets,
 - cyanide – a gas used in chemical warfare, and
 - fifty chemicals known to cause cancer.²
- Bar workers have higher rates of lung cancer than almost all other occupations, including firefighters and miners.³
- Non-smoking food service workers are 50 per cent more likely to develop lung cancer than other non-smokers.⁴
- The smoke from the burning non-filtered end of a cigarette has higher concentrations of hazardous substances than the mainstream smoke inhaled by the smoker.⁵
- Doctors say second-hand smoke kills as many as 3,000 Canadians each year.⁶

How second-hand smoke affects you

Exposure to second-hand smoke puts everyone at risk, particularly children because they breathe more rapidly than adults. When exposed to second-hand smoke, people:

- may experience headaches as well as eye, nose and throat irritation;⁷
- are at greater risk of chronic respiratory illness, including asthma, pneumonia and bronchitis;⁸
- may experience more colds and chronic middle ear infections;⁹

- are more likely to have a baby with low birth weight; ^{10,11}
- may increase their chance of getting lung cancer by 30 per cent; ¹² and,
- may increase their chance of dying from a heart attack. ¹²

What you can do about second-hand smoke

There are several things you can do about second-hand smoke:

- Show your support for smoke-free workplaces.
- Do not allow yourself or others to smoke around pregnant women, infants or children.
- Make your home and car smoke-free.
- Let a business owner know if someone is smoking in an enclosed public place or indoor workplace.
- Let the restaurants and other places you visit know that you appreciate their smoke-free environment.
- Talk to your children, family and friends about the importance of avoiding exposure to second-hand smoke.

¹ *Second-hand smoke – What's in it?* – National Clearinghouse on Tobacco and Health – January 1999

² *Passive Smoke: Nowhere to Hide* – Health Canada

³ Canadian Auto Workers, *Second-Hand Smoke: Butt it out* pamphlet

⁴ *Passive Smoke: Nowhere to Hide* – Health Canada

⁵ Canadian Auto Workers, *Second-Hand Smoke: Butt it out* pamphlet

⁶ *The dangers of second-hand smoke* – National Clearinghouse on Tobacco and Health – January 1999

⁷ Canadian Cancer Society – *Where there's smoke*

⁸ *Passive Smoke: Nowhere to Hide* – Health Canada

⁹ *Protecting Yourself and Your Family from Second-Hand Smoke* – American Lung Association

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Substance Abuse Prevention, Maryland, 1990
Pp. 20-24

¹¹ A Report of the Surgeon General 1986, Pp. 106-107

¹² *The dangers of second-hand smoke* – National Clearinghouse on Tobacco and Health – January 1999