

# Secondhand Smoke

Everyone has the right to breathe smoke-free air.

## Secondhand smoke is more than an annoyance; it's a health hazard.

- Secondhand smoke contains the same cancer-causing chemicals that smokers inhale.
- Even brief exposure to secondhand smoke is harmful.
- Adult exposure to secondhand smoke has immediate effects on the cardiovascular system and causes long term health problems like coronary heart disease and lung cancer.
- Secondhand smoke irritates your skin, eyes, nose, and throat.
- Secondhand smoke is a known cause of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Children who breathe secondhand smoke are more likely to have lung problems, ear infections, and severe asthma.

## Secondhand smoke knows no boundaries.

- Separate "no smoking" sections do not protect you from secondhand smoke. Neither does filtering the air or opening a window.
- No ventilation technology eliminates the health risks associated with secondhand smoke.
- Eliminating smoking in indoor spaces is the only way to protect nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke.

## There is no safe level of secondhand smoke.

- Being in a smoky room for even a short time (15-30 minutes) causes your blood platelets to stick together and damages the lining of your blood vessels. In your heart, these changes can be deadly.
- Brief exposure can trigger respiratory symptoms, including coughing, phlegm build-up, wheezing, and breathlessness.
- Breathing in secondhand smoke at home or work increases the risk of developing heart disease by 25 to 30 percent and increase the chances of getting lung cancer by 20 to 30 percent.

## Protect yourself and others from secondhand smoke.

- Make sure your home, car, and workplace are smoke-free.
- Support smoke-free public places.
- Ask people not to smoke around you or your children.

Remember,  
there is no right to smoke,  
but everyone has the right to  
breathe smoke-free air.

Information for this fact sheet came from The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report from the Surgeon General, 2006.



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This resource was created by the Tobacco Control Resource Center for Wisconsin  
It may be found at [www.tobwis.org](http://www.tobwis.org), or ordered by calling (800) 248-9244