



What you need to know about...

Secondhand Smoke

What is secondhand smoke?

Secondhand smoke, also called environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), is the combination of both smoke from burning tobacco products and smoke that is exhaled from someone who is smoking. Secondhand smoke exposure causes disease and premature death to those who do not smoke.

What is the impact of secondhand smoke?

There is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure. Secondhand smoke itself has been classified as a *known human carcinogen* (cancer-causing agent) and is composed of over 4,000 chemicals, over 50 of which are known to be cancer-causing.

Secondhand smoke exposure is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States. It causes lung cancer and heart disease and is responsible for approximately 3,400 lung cancer deaths and between 30,000 and 60,000 deaths from cardiovascular disease each year.

Exposure can trigger respiratory symptoms and can cause asthma attacks. Children can develop asthma or get worse asthma symptoms from being exposed to tobacco smoke. It can also cause ear infections, lower respiratory infections, and overall

lowered lung function in children. Infants who are exposed to secondhand smoke are also at risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Exposure causes 1,900 to 2,700 SIDS deaths in the U.S. each year.

What is the prevalence of second-hand smoke exposure?

Secondhand smoke exposure is most common at home and in the workplace. About 30% of workplaces are still not covered by smoke-free policies and about 35% of children in the U.S. live in homes where residents or visitors regularly smoke in the home. Making your home smoke-free is one of the most important steps you can take for the health of your children and family.

What is being done about second-hand smoke exposure?

Hundreds of cities and counties in the U.S. have already passed smoke-free air laws, and the numbers continue to grow. Smoke-free laws are beneficial to everyone and it has been shown that smoke-free laws do not hurt businesses. Illinois became the 22nd state to pass smoke-free legislation, which will become effective January 1, 2008.