

# Tobacco Facts

## Secondhand Smoke

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Secondhand smoke (SHS), known also as environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), passive, and involuntary smoke, is both the smoke given off by the burning end of cigarettes, cigars, or pipes and the smoke exhaled from the lungs of smokers that is inhaled by nonsmokers.<sup>1</sup>

Secondhand smoke is classified as a Group A carcinogen, which means it causes cancer in humans.<sup>4</sup> It contains a complex mixture of more than 4,000 chemicals, more than 50 of which are cancer-causing agents (carcinogens).<sup>2,3</sup>

Secondhand smoke causes premature death and disease in children and adults who do not smoke.<sup>1</sup>

There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.<sup>1</sup>

Exposure of adults to secondhand smoke has immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and causes coronary heart disease and lung cancer.<sup>1</sup>

Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), acute respiratory infections, ear problems and more severe asthma.<sup>1</sup>

Neither designating smoking rooms, purifying the air, nor ventilating buildings eliminates exposure of non-smokers to dangerous secondhand smoke.<sup>1</sup>

Living with a smoker increases a non-smoker's risk of lung cancer from secondhand smoke by 20 - 30%.<sup>1</sup>

In 2005, exposure to secondhand smoke killed an estimated 46,000 people in the U.S. from coronary heart disease.<sup>1</sup>

Secondhand smoke is estimated to cause 3,000 lung cancer deaths in nonsmokers each year.<sup>4</sup>

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#### Sources:

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Involuntary Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General--Executive Summary. U.S. DHHS, CDC, 2006.
2. National Cancer Institute. Health Effects of Exposure to Environment Tobacco Smoke. Smoking and Tobacco Control Monograph No. 10 ( PDF - 71k). Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, 1999.
3. National Toxicology Program. 10th Report on Carcinogens. Research Triangle Park, NC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, National Toxicology Program, December 2002.
4. EPA. Respiratory Health Effects of Passive Smoking: Lung Cancer and Other Disorders, 1992.

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For more information, call 503.228.4185 or visit the website: [www.tobaccoprevention.net](http://www.tobaccoprevention.net). Funded by CDC, grant # U1A DP000556-01.