

Protecting My Child's Heart and Lungs from Secondhand and Thirdhand Smoke

What is secondhand smoke?



Secondhand smoke is smoke in the air that was exhaled by the smoker or smoke from the burning end of the cigarette, e-cigarette, joint, pipe or bong. Secondhand smoke has:

- Poisons, like arsenic and cyanide, that cause cancer
- Tiny particles of soot and tar, which travel deep into your child's lungs
- Toxic gases, like carbon monoxide
- E-cigarette vapor contains formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, benzene and other chemicals that may harm your child

What is thirdhand smoke?



Smoke settles onto clothes, fabrics, carpets, and toys in places where people smoke. Later, when your child hugs or is held by someone wearing clothes they smoked in, the chemicals, poisons and gasses from smoke can harm your child. When your child walks or crawls on these carpets or rugs, or touches fabrics or toys, they touch these chemicals, poisons and gasses. This is called thirdhand smoke.

How is secondhand or thirdhand smoke bad for my child's heart and lungs?



Infants and children who breathe in secondhand or thirdhand smoke:

- Have more lung problems like asthma, coughing and wheezing since smoke irritates the lungs and slows their growth. The heart and lungs work closely together, so a child with a heart problem needs healthy lungs.
- Have more colds and ear infections.
- Are more likely to die of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in their first year.
- Need more trips to the emergency room or hospital.
- Have higher blood pressure and increased risk of adult type heart problems.
- Are more likely to smoke themselves when they grow up.

How can I protect my child?

Quit smoking



- If you smoke, try to quit smoking – this may be the right time.
- Think about quitting for your child's health. Two-thirds of parents say they are motivated to quit to improve their child's health—twice as many as are motivated to quit for their own health.
- Using both nicotine replacement (patch, gum, lozenges, spray, or inhaler) and some form of counseling support helps people quit best.

For information and help to quit smoking visit www.smokefree.gov or call the free Washington State Tobacco Quitline:

1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)

Deaf or hard of hearing: 1-877-777-6534

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To Learn More

- Heart Center 206-987-2015, option 4
- Pulmonary Medicine 206-987-2174
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

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Do not smoke indoors or in cars

- If you cannot quit, smoke outside only.
- Do not smoke in your car, even if your child is not in the car.
- Post “No Smoking” signs in your home and car to remind yourself and others.
- Smoking near an open window or in a different room does not keep smoke away from your children.

Help your child avoid thirdhand smoke

- Talk to your child's daycare, babysitter or nanny about the risks of secondhand and thirdhand smoke exposure.
- Pick a jacket or coat from your closet that you wear outside when smoking and remove before coming back into the house. This smoking jacket or coat should never come back into the house.
- Keep your hair and clothes clean when you are around your child.
- Do not allow anyone to smoke anywhere inside your home or car – even when your child is not present.
- Smokers can have a poor sense of smell and often cannot smell the smoke themselves. But, if anyone can smell smoke, it is getting into your child's lungs.
- It is up to adults to protect children. Small things you do can make a big difference in your child's health.