



Cancer Awareness
Educate · Empower · Act

Smart Tip - Exposure To Secondhand Smoke

Tip: Did you know that more than 60,000 people die each year from exposure to secondhand smoke and there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke?¹

Evidence:

Secondhand smoke, also known as environmental tobacco smoke, is the smoke that bystanders are exposed to when near a person who is smoking. Secondhand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals known to be toxic or cancer-causing, including formaldehyde, benzene, vinyl chloride, arsenic, ammonia, and hydrogen cyanide.¹

The National Toxicology Program has concluded that secondhand or environmental tobacco smoke is *known to cause cancer in humans*.²

According to the Surgeon General, there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Breathing even a little can be dangerous.¹

Exposure to secondhand smoke increases the risk of heart³ disease as well as many types of cancer. Secondhand smoke (passive smoke) contains the same toxic chemicals that are inhaled in active smoking. In April 2009 a Canadian expert panel reported their conclusion that women exposed to tobacco smoke in adolescence and adulthood face an increased risk of breast cancer.⁴

Even brief exposure to secondhand smoke can cause immediate harm and begin the cancer process, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Exposure to secondhand smoke can cause pneumonia, bronchial and respiratory infections, ear infections, and new cases of asthma in infants and children. Secondhand smoke is a known cause of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome⁵ and is also responsible for spontaneous abortions, still births and low birth weights³. The American Academy of Pediatrics has concluded that exposure during childhood to secondhand smoke may be associated with development of cancer during adulthood.

The recently coined "third hand smoke" is the residue from tobacco smoke that lingers in rooms on surfaces and clothes long after smoking stops. There is a growing body of evidence that this "third hand smoke" has significant health risks. Young children are especially at risk because they place their hands in their mouths after touching tobacco contaminated surfaces.⁶

Recommendations:

- ✓ **If you smoke, quit.** There is no time like the present. Make a commitment to take charge of your health and the health of those you care about. See below for information on the:

Suffolk County Department of Health Services, "*Learn To Be. . .Tobacco Free*" program!

- ✓ Until you quit, be sure not to smoke near children and pregnant woman, since they are especially at risk for health problems related to secondhand smoke.
- ✓ If you do not smoke, don't start. Encourage healthy behaviors in your children and set an example by not smoking.

Resources to help you Quit:

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services, "*Learn To Be. . .Tobacco Free*" program offers many services available to Suffolk County residents.

1. Smoking Cessation Programs: (631-853-4017)

This program provides behavior modification and supportive pharmaceuticals to medically eligible participants. We support them in discovering the benefits of a tobacco-free lifestyle. All groups and programs are supervised by a nurse practitioner and services are provided to residents at no cost. Program participants also receive personalized follow-up. Classes are held during the day and in the evenings throughout the county. To help prevent relapse, monthly support groups are held in Eastern and Western Suffolk for those who have completed the program. Classes are held at businesses for employees and in county offices specifically for our employees.

For more information, call 631-853-4017 or visit the Department's website at www.suffolkcountyny.gov/health.

2. School Based Programs: (631-853-3162)

HealthSmart, a complete K-12 health education curriculum, is available to Suffolk County Schools. Suffolk County offers presentations to high schools, colleges, and community groups to tell the truth about tobacco and secondhand smoke.

3. Tobacco Control Laws: (631-853-2967)

Suffolk County strictly enforces all state and local laws that apply to tobacco sales and use, including laws that prohibit the sale of tobacco to youth under the age of 19. The Department also enforces the New York State and Suffolk County clean indoor air laws. To report violators of tobacco control laws, call 631-853-2967.

Resources for More Information:

- Centers for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/>
- Suffolk County Department of Health Services: www.suffolkcountyny.gov/health
- Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, 2009. Women's Health and Smoking: www.tobaccofreekids.org

References:

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2. National Toxicology Program, 2000. Report on Carcinogens, Ninth Edition; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, National Toxicology Program <http://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/ntp/roc/eleventh/profiles/s176toba.pdf>.
3. Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, 2009. Women's Health and Smoking www.tobaccofreekids.org.
4. University of Toronto Dalla Lana School of Public Health, 2009. Press Release on the Report of the Expert Panel on Tobacco Smoke and Breast Cancer Risk. April 23, 2009.
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6. American's for Nonsmokers Rights, 2009. "Thirdhand Smoke: Growing Awareness of Health Hazard." ANR Update, 28(1), Spring 2009.