

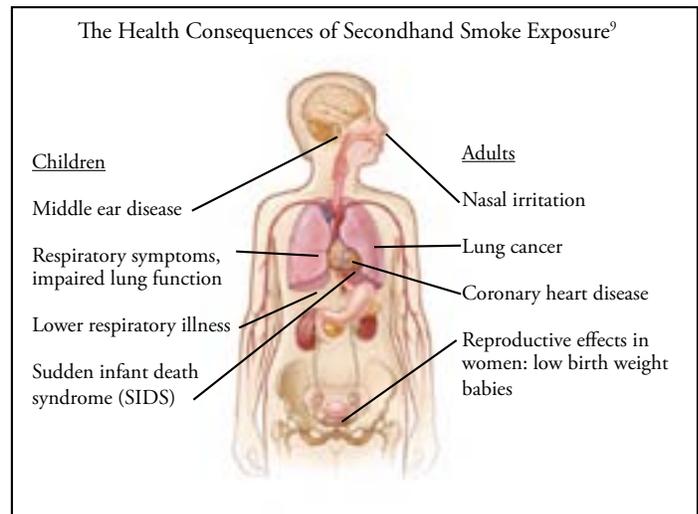
# Secondhand Smoke

## Who is Exposed to Secondhand Smoke?

- Despite progress that is eliminating tobacco use in public spaces, millions of people remain exposed to secondhand smoke.<sup>1</sup>
- Blue-collar and service workers are less likely to be covered by workplace smoking restrictions than white collar workers.<sup>2</sup>
- Exposure to secondhand smoke is more prevalent among children.<sup>1</sup> Ninety percent of children's secondhand smoke exposure is attributed to parents.<sup>3</sup>

## What is Secondhand Smoke?

- Secondhand smoke consists of the smoke that is released from the burning end of a cigarette (sidestream smoke) and the smoke that is exhaled by a smoker (mainstream smoke).<sup>4</sup>
- Secondhand smoke is a human lung carcinogen.<sup>4, 5</sup> It contains at least 250 cancer-causing chemicals, including: benzene, arsenic, beryllium, chromium, cadmium, ethylene oxide and nickel compounds.<sup>4, 6</sup>
- Secondhand smoke contains various toxic chemicals and gases, including hydrogen cyanide (used in chemical weapons), carbon monoxide (found in car exhaust), butane (used in lighter fluid), ammonia (used in household cleaners) and toluene (found in paint thinners).<sup>4</sup>



## Health Risks

- Secondhand smoke causes premature death and disease in nonsmokers.<sup>4</sup>
- Exposure to secondhand smoke even for a short period of time has immediate consequences for the cardiovascular system and can trigger a heart attack.<sup>4</sup>
- Nonsmokers' risk of heart disease increases 25-30% when exposed to secondhand smoke at work or home.<sup>4</sup>
- In the U.S., exposure to secondhand smoke causes approximately 3,400 lung cancer deaths among adult nonsmokers each year.<sup>7</sup>
- Nonsmokers' risk of lung cancer increases 20-30% when exposed to secondhand smoke at work or home.<sup>4</sup>

## Health Risks Among Children

- Secondhand smoke is associated with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and low birth weight babies.<sup>8</sup>
- Because their lungs are not fully developed, young children are particularly susceptible to the damaging effects of secondhand smoke.<sup>8</sup>
- In children, secondhand smoke causes respiratory symptoms and infections, including wheeze, breathlessness, cough and phlegm.<sup>8</sup>
- Children with asthma who are exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to suffer from more severe and frequent asthma attacks.<sup>4</sup>
- Children who are routinely exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to suffer from middle ear infections and require ear tubes for drainage.<sup>4</sup>

## References

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- <sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The health consequences of involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke: A report of the Surgeon General.* Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2006.
- <sup>5</sup> United States Environmental Protection Agency. Respiratory health effects of passive smoking (also known as exposure to secondhand smoke or environmental tobacco smoke -ETS). 1992. Available at: <http://www.epa.gov/smokefree/healtheffects.html>
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- <sup>7</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smoking-attributable mortality, years of potential life lost, and productivity losses—United States, 2000–2004. *MMWR* 2008;57(45):1226–1228.
- <sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Children and secondhand smoke exposure. Excerpts from *The health consequences of involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke: A report of the Surgeon General.* Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2007.
- <sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *How tobacco smoke causes disease: The biology and behavioral basis for smoking-attributable disease. Executive summary.* Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2010.

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