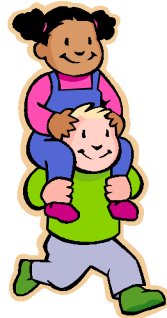


Protecting Your Children From Secondhand Smoke



Effects of Secondhand Smoke on Children

Children experience the effects of secondhand smoke more than adults. They breathe faster than adults, so they inhale more air. When the air is polluted by secondhand smoke, children breathe in more poisons and chemicals. Smoking and secondhand smoke also affects babies before they are born.

Health Effects:

Children who breathe secondhand smoke may experience health problems including:

- twice as many ear infections
- twice as likely to have asthma
- more breathing (respiratory) problems, such as coughs or mucous and twice as likely to wheeze
- three times as likely to get either bronchitis or pneumonia
- twice as likely to have allergies
- might spit up more often
- more likely to be hospitalized for an illness before they are a year old
- more cavities in baby teeth as well as slower eruption of some permanent teeth.

Development and Behaviour Effects:

Children who breathe secondhand smoke can have other problems including:

- more likely to be cranky, restless, and hyperactive
- 3 to 5 months behind other children in school, especially in math or reading
- more likely to develop learning, memory and language problems and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).



Protect Your Children From Secondhand Smoke

The best choice is to keep your children's world completely smokefree. This is achieved by quitting smoking and not allowing your child to be anywhere there is smoke.

Here are some ideas to reduce the amount of smoke your children breathe. The best is to be 100% smokefree, however, every small step helps to protect your children. Start with small changes and build on them. Soon, you will have a smokefree home for your children.

Keep Your Home Smokefree

- Smoke outside** if your children are old enough to be left alone.
- Smoke outside, even when the weather is bad.
- Ask friends and family to watch your children while you go outside to smoke.
- Make your home smokefree and stick to it. Ask your family and friends to smoke outside. Stick to your rules. It's your house.
- Change clothes after smoking or designate a special jacket or sweater that can be removed after every time you smoke. Before cuddling baby, always wash your hands.



When you Can Not Get Outside to Smoke

- Choose a smoking room. Keep ashtrays and lighters there. Keep the door closed. Smoke only in this room, even when you children are not at home.
- Smoke in a less comfortable place . Choose a location where you do not usually smoke.
- Use a fan in your smoking room to blow smoke out an open window
- Make sure no one ever smokes in your children's bedrooms.
- Post “No Smoking” signs in each room that you have chosen to be smokefree.
- Increase the air flow in your home—open the windows.

Keep Your Car Smokefree

- Make the car completely smokefree. No exceptions.
- Ask others not to smoke in the car. Stick to your rules.
- Put a “No Smoking” sign in the car.
- Put a picture of your children in the car to remind you why being smokefree is important.
- Leave your cigarettes at home or put them in the trunk of your car.
- Fill your ashtray with potpourri so you can't use it to smoke and to make your car smell nice.
- Smoke outside the car before you get in.

Change your Smoking Habits

You can protect your children from secondhand smoke by making changes in your smoking habits:

- Move _____ (fill in the blank with a number, such as 2) of your daily cigarettes outside. Gradually increase this number.
- Delay having a cigarette until it is convenient to go outside to smoke.
- Wait until your child has left the house to have a cigarette.
- Put a distraction such as a stress ball, sugar-free candy or gum, or crossword puzzle where you usually keep ashtrays or cigarettes.
- Set smokefree times. For example, don't smoke between 9 in the evening and 9 in the morning.
- Wait for 10, 15 or 30 minutes before having your first cigarette of the day. Slowly increase this time as you feel able.
- Try to stop smoking for 24 hours.
- Chew sugar-free or nicotine gum, hard sugar-free candy, or fennel seeds instead of smoking.



Add your own ideas here:

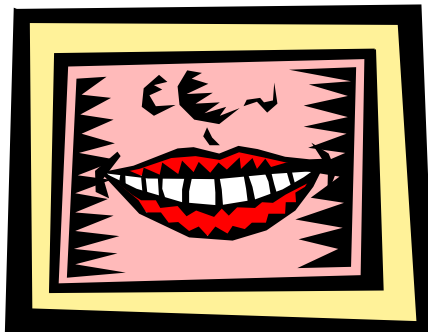
Reward yourself for changing your smoking habits and protecting your children from secondhand smoke. It's hard work—you deserve it.



Benefits of Living Smokefree

For Parents:

- More energy
- Breathe easier
- Save money that you can spend on yourself and your children
- Better chance of a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby
- Lower risk of lung cancer and heart disease
- Skin will stay younger, and softer, and have fewer wrinkles
- A wider choice of hormonal birth control methods
- Skin, nails, and teeth won't be stained
- Food will smell and taste better
- Clothes, car and home will smell better
- **You will feel good about quitting.**



For Baby:

- Will be healthier
- Not smoking in pregnancy decreases the risk of Type II Diabetes in your child
- Healthier birth weights
- Fewer colds, coughing and wheezing problems, and less mucous production
- Less likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Lower risk of asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia or ear infections
- Will cry less
- Less prone to tooth decay
- Less likely to have food allergies
- Less likely to become a smoker if parents are non-smokers
- **Less likely to develop learning, memory and language problems and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).**

For Pets:

- Lower risk of cancer and heart disease.

Challenges

Sometimes it can be difficult to create a smokefree environment for your children. Here are some helpful hints:

My friends, family, or partner do not support my efforts to protect my children from secondhand smoke. What can I do?

- Educate them about the risks of secondhand smoke.
- Contact the Canadian Cancer Society and ask for the booklet *“For Smokers Who Don’t Want to Quit”* 1-888-939-3333.
- Ask them to read this booklet.

My children are being difficult. What can I do?

- Do something physical—clean your house, do push-ups, go for a walk.
- Praise them when you are proud of their behaviour.
- Take a little break that does not include smoking.

I am around people who smoke. What can I do?

- Ask them not to smoke around your children.

I am bored, stressed, worried or angry. What can I do?

- Keep your hands busy, find someone to talk to, doodle, do a crossword puzzle.

I crave cigarettes. What can I do?

- Hide ashtrays and put your cigarettes out of sight.
- Keep your hands busy and drink water or chew gum.

I do not have access to a smokefree vehicle.
What can I do?

- Ask people not to smoke when your children are in the car.



If You Are Thinking About Quitting

Contact:

- Community Addiction Services 655-4100
- Smoker's Helpline 1-877-513-5333
- Tobacco Help Line 655-4685
- Pharmacist in your community
- Doctor
- Nurse Practitioner
- www.gosmokefree.ca



Adapted from the STARSS Program
(Start Thinking About Reducing Secondhand Smoke)