

PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



Pinellas County Health Department

Steps to a HealthierFL—Pinellas County

Secondhand Smoke Hurts Kids

What is Secondhand Smoke?



Secondhand smoke is other people's tobacco smoke from a cigarette, cigar or pipe. Wherever people smoke, there is secondhand smoke in the air.

We spend more time in our homes than anywhere else, so the thought of cancer-causing chemicals in our houses and apartments can be quite disturbing. Yet, that is exactly what happens when someone lights a cigarette in your home. Going into another room to smoke or opening a window will not protect children from the dangers of secondhand smoke. When someone smokes around your child, your child is smoking, too.

Secondhand smoke is dangerous to everyone. It contains over four-thousand dangerous chemicals and forty-three of these chemicals are known to cause cancer. It is especially harmful to unborn babies, infants and children because their bodies and lungs are not completely developed. Secondhand smoke can cause lungs not to function normally in children and slow the growth of their lungs. Babies and children exposed to secondhand smoke have greater risk for:

- ◆ Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- ◆ Ear infections
- ◆ Hearing problems
- ◆ Asthma
- ◆ Colds
- ◆ Coughing
- ◆ Wheezing



www.nsc.org
www.lungusa.org

Did You Know?

Children in a home with secondhand smoke breathe as much smoke each day as if they had smoked three cigarettes.

AND.....

Children riding in a car filled with secondhand smoke for one hour breathe as much smoke as if they had smoked three cigarettes.

www.aahealth.org

Secondhand Smoke Can Make a Healthy Child Sick.



In Pinellas County, over sixty percent of our middle school students are regularly exposed to secondhand smoke. This takes place most often in a home.



Pledge To Make Your Home A Smoke-Free Home!

What can you do to protect your child's health?

Choose to make your home a smoke-free home. It may feel awkward or uncomfortable at first to tell people not to smoke in your home, but simply explain the facts about secondhand smoke. Tell them that for the sake of your children's health, you cannot allow smoking in your home. Have guests smoke outdoors if they must smoke. Have gum or mints available as an alternative.

If someone in your household smokes, be sympathetic and understanding, but let them know that cigarette smoke affects everyone around them. Ask them to smoke outside, if they must smoke.

Even if you don't have any smokers living in your house, it's important to set a clear house rule that family and visitors can not smoke in your home. This not only keeps your home free from secondhand smoke, but allows you to be a positive role model for your family.



What can you do if you smoke and can't quit?

If you smoke the best way to protect your children is to **stop completely**.

If you cannot quit here are some tips to help protect your family:

- ⇒ Choose not to smoke in your home and car and do not allow family and visitors to do so. Infants and toddlers are especially vulnerable to the health risks from secondhand smoke.
- ⇒ Until you can quit, choose to smoke outside. Moving to another room or opening a window is not enough to protect your children. The smoke still gets in the air, and children still breathe it in.
- ⇒ Never smoke in the room where your child sleeps and do not allow anyone else to smoke there.
- ⇒ Never smoke or allow smoking near your children.
- ⇒ Do not allow childcare providers or others who work in your home to smoke.
- ⇒ Place "Thank You for Not Smoking" signs around the house.

www.nsc.org



The *Florida Tobacco Quit-For-Life Line* offers free, confidential, comprehensive telephone counseling to help you quit smoking. For more information and support on quitting smoking call 1-800-822-6669

For more information on secondhand smoke visit www.epa.gov/smokefree



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For information about **Steps to a HealthierFL-Pinellas County** visit our website: www.StepsFL.com or call 2-1-1 (Pinellas County cell phone users must call 727-210-4211)