

PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



Pinellas County Health Department

Steps to a HealthierFL—Pinellas County

Protect Your Kids From Secondhand Smoke

What is secondhand smoke and why is it so important? Secondhand smoke is a mixture of two forms of smoke from tobacco-burning products. The first type is called **mainstream smoke**. Mainstream smoke is exhaled by someone smoking. Secondhand smoke can also be the smoke from the end of a burning cigarette, cigar or pipe and this is called **sidestream smoke**. Although, mainstream and sidestream smoke are very similar, unfiltered sidestream smoke burns at a lower temperature and leaves higher amounts of many dangerous tobacco chemicals in the air. This is why secondhand smoke is a real danger to non-smokers. Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke absorb nicotine and other substances just as smokers do. You need to know that the greater your exposure is to secondhand smoke, the greater the level of these harmful substances will be in your body.

Why Are Children Affected?

Children are especially helpless against secondhand smoke. Children are growing, and per pound of weight, they drink more water, eat more food and breathe in more air than adults. Therefore, children take in more secondhand smoke than adults in the same room. Also, children are often closer to the floor than adults, and this is where heavier chemicals tend to gather. In addition to these risks, children have narrower airways than adults do. Because of that, irritation or inflammation caused by smoke can block the airways of a young child.

Most children cannot escape smoke-filled environments. Children cannot usually decide where they live, eat and play. So if mom or dad smokes, infants and children are usually exposed to high levels of secondhand smoke.

Did You Know?

- ▶ **A room filled with smoke can have up to six times the air pollution as a busy highway**
- ▶ **Smoking in a small space such as a car is 23 times more poisonous than smoking in a house**
- ▶ **It takes more than three hours to remove most of the smoke of one cigarette from a room after smoking has ended**



If you must smoke, take it outside.

Secondhand smoke is linked to a higher risk of developing asthma in children. It also can trigger more frequent and severe asthma attacks in children who already have the disease. Smoking by an open door or a fan does little to reduce the exposure to smoke. Smoking outdoors with the doors closed is the most effective way to protect children from secondhand smoke.

For more information on secondhand smoke, call 1-866-smoke-free (1-866-766-5337) or go to: www.epa.gov/smokefree

Pledge to Keep Your Home & Car Smoke-free:

Join the millions of people who are protecting their children from tobacco smoke. You can become a child's hero by keeping a smoke free home and car. Secondhand smoke can cause children to suffer bronchitis, pneumonia, ear infections and severe asthma attacks. Also, it is proven that children are more likely to smoke if their parents do. Set a good example and protect them by protecting your home and car.

- 1) Go to the website: www.epa.gov/smokefree and read helpful information on making your home and car smoke-free.
- 2) Get your own **Smoke Free Home Pledge Certificate** by clicking on the certificate.
- 3) Display the certificate to let your children, family and visitors know you have taken an important step to keep your home and car smoke-free.



Free Asthma Care Coordination!

Free suggestions, recommendations and home inspections to assist in identifying asthma triggers are available to you. Call Stan at 727-507-4336 ext. 1336 or in South Pinellas County call Omar Zidi at 727-767-4376.

Tobacco Facts You Should Know

In the United States, 21 million children live in homes where residents or visitors smoke in the home on a regular basis.

It is estimated that only 25 percent of women quit smoking once they become pregnant.

Cigarette smoking during pregnancy can cause serious health problems for both mother and child. These include premature birth, low-birth-weight infants, stillbirth and infant death.

The best way to protect an unborn child is to quit smoking. If a woman plans to get pregnant in the near future, quitting is very important! A woman who is within the first three or four months of pregnancy can lower the chances of having a premature baby by quitting.

Mothers who smoke can pass nicotine to their children through breast milk.

Children who breathe secondhand smoke are more likely to develop colds, bronchitis, and pneumonia.

If a mom smokes more than ten cigarettes a day, the odds of her child developing asthma are twice as high.

Secondhand smoke can cause build up of fluid in the middle ear. This can result in your child having more ear infections.



Don't Smoke in Your Home or Car and Don't Allow Others To!



Statistics show that support is very helpful in quitting smoking. The **Florida Tobacco Quit-For-Life Line** offers free, confidential, comprehensive telephone counseling to help you quit smoking or chewing tobacco. Call today! 1-877-822-6669



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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)