



Secondhand Smoke and Asthma

What Is Secondhand Smoke?

- Secondhand smoke from a burning cigarette, cigar, or pipe is a mixture of more than 4,000 compounds, over fifty of which are known to cause cancer.¹
- In 1992, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classified environmental tobacco smoke as a "Group A" carcinogen - a substance that produces cancer in humans.²
- Environmental tobacco smoke is the nation's No. 1 airborne carcinogen.³
- It takes more than three hours to remove 95 percent of the smoke from one cigarette from the room once smoking has ended.⁴

Secondhand Smoke and Asthma

- Having a mother who smokes doubles a child's risk of developing asthma.⁵
- 18 to 34% of childhood asthma is attributable to maternal smoking.⁶
- Approximately 38% of US children aged 2 months to 5 years of age are exposed to secondhand smoke in the home.⁷
- 5.4 million children each year have ailments such as asthma and ear infections caused by exposure to secondhand smoke, costing \$4.6 billion to treat.⁸
- Secondhand exacerbates asthma in 400,000 to one million children and causes 8,000 to 26,000 new cases of asthma each year in the United States.⁹
- One million asthmatic children in the United States are exposed to their parent's tobacco smoke.¹⁰
- Exposure to secondhand smoke is associated with a higher risk of developing asthma and more frequent and severe asthma attacks in children who already have the disease.¹¹
- Sixty-seven percent of asthmatic children of smokers report that secondhand smoke aggravates their asthma.¹²
- Each year in the United States, an estimated 13 percent of all asthma cases and more than half a million physician visits for asthma are due to smoking in the home.¹³
- Exposure to secondhand smoke substantially increases the risk of lower respiratory tract infections, and is responsible for an estimated 436,000 cases of bronchitis and 190,000 cases of pneumonia and 16% of all lung infections in U.S. children under the age of five annually.¹⁴
- In homes where parents smoke outside, indoor nicotine levels are 5-7 times that of non-smoking homes.¹⁵

References

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