



Connecticut Department of Public Health

Fact Sheet

THE DANGERS OF SECONDHAND SMOKE

Second-hand smoke affects everyone ~ Smokers and non-smokers alike.

- Smoke from the end of a burning cigarette is unfiltered and contains twice as much tar and nicotine as the smoke that a smoker inhales through the filter.
- Secondhand smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, many of which are known to cause cancer. Some chemicals commonly found in secondhand smoke are carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, tar, cyanide, ammonia, benzene, arsenic, and nicotine.
- The airborne chemicals in secondhand smoke create a toxic environment for anyone in close proximity to a smoker.
- Secondhand smoke has been associated with many of the same health problems as smoking:
 - ⇒ Respiratory illnesses
 - ⇒ Lung cancer
 - ⇒ Cardiovascular disease
 - ⇒ Heart disease
- An EPA study concluded that every year about 3,000 non-smokers in the U.S. die from lung cancer caused by secondhand smoke.
- Secondhand smoke can cause irritation to the eyes, nose and throat; can irritate the lungs and lead to coughing and chest discomfort.
 - ⇒ Asthma
 - ⇒ Bronchitis
 - ⇒ Coughing
 - ⇒ Wheezing
 - ⇒ Pneumonia
 - ⇒ Ear Infections
- Each year approximately 700 CT and 63,000 U.S. non-smokers die as a result of exposure to secondhand smoke; it is the third leading cause of preventable death.¹
 - ⇒ Annually in the U.S., approximately 3,400 lung cancer and 46,000 heart disease deaths of non-smokers result from breathing tobacco smoke.

TOBACCO USE PREVENTION & CONTROL PROGRAM

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Keeping Connecticut Healthy

¹ U.S. Surgeon General's Report, 2006



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