

Secondhand Smoke

www.smarterthansmoking.org.au

Secondhand smoke is dangerous

Did you know that when you are around someone who is smoking you are breathing in smoke? This is known as 'secondhand smoke'.

Secondhand smoke is sometimes called 'passive smoke' or 'environmental tobacco smoke' but all the terms refer to the smoke which escapes from the burning end of a cigarette and also from the smoker's mouth when they breathe out.

When they are around someone who is smoking, the amount of smoke a non-smoker breathes in depends on how close they are to the smoker(s), the size of the room, the number of smokers in the room. Opening a window does not protect you from secondhand smoke. Using ventilation, air conditioning, or a fan does not eliminate secondhand smoke.

Secondhand smoke contains more than 4000 chemicals that are dangerous to your health.

Exposure to secondhand smoke can cause:

- Breathing problems
- Respiratory problems such as pneumonia and bronchitis
- Slower lung growth and decreased lung function
- Increased risk of lung cancer and heart disease
- Asthmatics to experience wheezing and chest tightening
- Ear infections
- Smelly clothes and hair
- Sore and/or watery eyes
- Sneezing and coughing
- Sore throat.

Breathing in secondhand smoke can make you sick and some of the diseases that secondhand smoke can cause can kill you.

References

1. The Health consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke. A Report of the Surgeon General. www.cdc.gov/tobacco
2. www.health.wa.gov.au/tobaccocontrol
3. www.health.gov.au/tobacco

What can you do about it?

Protect yourself

- You have the right to clean air, so politely ask others not to smoke when they are near you.
- Remind those smoking around you that smoking is now restricted in outdoor eating areas, and banned within the flags at the beach, in cars carrying children and within 10 metres of playground equipment.
- If they don't stop smoking then move away from them.



- Remind anyone you know who smokes that smoking is not only bad for them but the secondhand smoke harms other people too.
- Make your environment a smoke-free one.
- Make your home and car smoke-free.

All Australian State and Territory Governments have laws prohibiting smoking in cinemas and theatres, most forms of public transport and in food preparation areas.

Also, most have banned smoking in enclosed public places such as restaurants and shopping centres, pubs and nightclubs and in cars with children. Some State and Territory Governments have also banned smoking in outdoor areas such as outdoor eating and drinking places, building entrances, sporting facilities and public beaches.

Staff, students and visitors are also prohibited from smoking on Education Department premises in Western Australia, as per the Smoking in the Workplace Department of Education Policy.