

Your Child and Secondhand Smoke

What is secondhand smoke?

- Secondhand smoke is a mixture of burning tobacco from cigarettes, cigars or pipes and the air that smokers breathe out when they smoke.
- It contains many harmful chemicals than can cause illness in adults and children.

Secondhand smoke can harm babies and children in many ways including:

Lungs:

- Irritates nose, mouth, and throat.
- Makes your child cough and wheeze.
- Damages lungs so they don't work well.
- Increases frequency of colds.
- Increases chances of getting bronchitis or pneumonia.
- Increases chances of developing asthma or making asthma worse.

Ears:

- Causes frequent ear infections.
- Increases fluid behind eardrums. This can damage hearing.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS):

- Infants born to mothers who smoke while pregnant and infants who are exposed to smoke are at a greater risk of dying from SIDS.

What can I do to protect my child from secondhand smoke?

Your child depends on you to protect him or her from harmful things like secondhand smoke.

- If you smoke, QUIT!
- Keep your entire house smoke-free.
- Keep your car smoke-free.
- Keep your child in smoke-free areas when you are away from home.
- If you smoke, wash your hands and change your clothes before you hold your baby.
- Choose smoke-free restaurants. A “non-smoking area” does not protect your baby from secondhand smoke.
- Choose a child care provider who doesn’t smoke or allow smoking in the child care center.
- If you are pregnant, stop smoking now, before your baby is born.

REMEMBER...

- Children who see parents or family members smoking are more likely to start smoking themselves.
- More than half of people who smoke started smoking before they were 18 years old.

Where can I get more information?

- Your child’s health care provider.
- Your public health department.

Ready to quit smoking?

1-800-QUIT-NOW

1-800-784-8669



South Carolina Department of Health
and Environmental Control

www.scdhec.gov