

What is Secondhand Smoke

Secondhand smoke is the smoke that smokers breathe out. It is also the smoke from the end of a burning cigarette, cigar or pipe.

Burning tobacco puts thousands of chemicals into the air. When nonsmokers breathe secondhand smoke these chemicals enter their bodies.

Many chemicals in secondhand smoke are poisons:

- ⊗ **Nicotine** is used to kill insects. One or two drops of liquid nicotine will kill a person.
- ⊗ **Nitrosamines** are strong chemicals that can cause cancer.
- ⊗ **Carbon Monoxide** is a poison gas. It has no colour or smell. In large amounts, it can make people sick or even kill them.

Why Is It Dangerous?

The chemicals in secondhand smoke can make people sick.

Heart Attacks

Secondhand smoke can make blood vessels get narrow and hard. It can make blood thicken or clot. When this happens the blood cannot carry oxygen to the heart. This can damage the heart and cause a heart attack.

Cancer

Secondhand smoke can increase the risk of getting lung cancer and nose cancer.

Asthma

Children who breathe secondhand smoke can get asthma. Their asthma attacks can happen more often and gets worse each time. Asthma attacks can be life threatening.

Secondhand Smoke and Children

Before age 10, children bodies are not fully grown. They have an even harder time fighting the harmful effects of second hand smoke.

- ⊗ **Secondhand smoke causes bronchitis, pneumonia and other lung diseases** in young children.
- ⊗ **It causes asthma and makes it worse.** When airways get very narrow, breathing is hard and hurts.
- ⊗ **It sends numerous amounts of children to the hospital** each year with lung infections and asthma.
- ⊗ **It increases ear infections.** These can damage the middle ear and may require surgery to cure.
- ⊗ **It can harm an unborn baby.** A pregnant woman who breathes second hand smoke may have a smaller baby than normal.
- ⊗ **It hurts newborn babies.** Babies who breathe secondhand smoke open their eyes less and move less. They are more likely to die of sudden death syndrome.

What Does It Do to the Body

- ⊗ **Secondhand smoke doubles the risk of heart attack.**
- ⊗ **It increases the risk of cancer.** It causes cells to change, grow out of control and take over healthy cells.
- ⊗ **It irritates the eyes, nose and throat.** It can make them sore and swollen.
- ⊗ **It causes headaches and nausea.**
- ⊗ **It irritates the lungs.** It can cause coughing and chest pain.
- ⊗ **It may reduce Vitamin C in the body.** Vitamin C is needed for growth and good health.
- ⊗ **It contributes to allergies, asthma and bronchitis.** Many people are allergic to tobacco smoke.
- ⊗ **It puts carbon monoxide into the air.** Carbon monoxide can replace oxygen in the blood. This can poison the cells in the body.

Secondhand Smoke

Protect Yourself

You can reduce the health dangers of secondhand smoke for you and your family.

- ⊗ **Put up no smoking signs** in your home and car. Remove any ashtrays.
- ⊗ **Ask** for a smoke-free work area.
- ⊗ **Eat** in smoke free restaurants.
- ⊗ **Ride** in smoke-free buses and taxis.
- ⊗ **Help people** who are trying to stop smoking.

Breathing Secondhand
smoke is smoking
without a choice.

If You Smoke

Smokers can help protect others:

- ⊗ **Never** smoke around children or pregnant women.
- ⊗ **Smoke in open areas** away from other people.
- ⊗ **Smoke outside** away from doors and windows.
- ⊗ **Exhale** smoke away from other people.
- ⊗ **Do not smoke** in a closed car or room with other people.
- ⊗ **Do not let** a cigarette, cigar or pipe sit and burn.
- ⊗ **Put out** smoking items all the way.
- ⊗ **Try to stop smoking!**

Chemicals from
secondhand smoke
stay in the air even
after the smoke is gone.

To Learn More

To learn more about secondhand smoke or for help to stop smoking, contact:

National Council on Drug Abuse

Web: www.ncda.org.jm

Email: ncda@cwjamaica.com

Referrals for Rehabilitation:

- ✓ Richmond Fellowship Jamaica (Patricia House)
(876) 978-2324 / (876) 978-1670
- ✓ Detoxification Unit—UHWI
(876) 977-0705
- ✓ Ward 21—UHWI
(876) 977-2248
- ✓ William Chamberlain Rehabilitation Centre (Salvation Army)
(876) 908-0389 / (876) 922-4030



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