

# Do you know the real dangers of secondhand smoke?

## What is Secondhand Smoke?

Secondhand smoke refers to tobacco smoke that is passively breathed in by those in the general vicinity of a person who is smoking. Terms that have been used to refer to secondhand smoke are passive smoking, involuntary smoking, or environmental tobacco smoke (ETS).

Secondhand smoke is a mixture of gases and fine particles that include:

- Smoke from a burning tobacco product such as a cigarette, electronic cigarette, cigar, or pipe
- Smoke that has been exhaled or breather out by the person or people smoking
- **More than 7,000 chemicals including hundreds that are toxic and at least 250 that are known to cause cancer or other potentially deadly diseases**



When a nonsmoker inhales secondhand smoke, he or she is exposed to the same toxins and chemicals, including nicotine, as the smoker. Children are especially vulnerable to the effects of environmental tobacco smoke as their bodies are rapidly growing and developing.

**There is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke; even brief exposure can cause immediate harm to your health.**

## Fast Facts

Each year in the United States alone, secondhand smoke is responsible for:

- An estimated 42,000 deaths from heart disease among current nonsmokers
- About 3,400 lung cancer deaths from heart disease among current nonsmokers
- Heightened asthma and asthma-related problems in up to 1 million asthmatic children
- Between 150,000 and 300,000 lower respiratory tract infections (lung and bronchus) in children under 18 months of age, with 7,500 to 15,000 hospitalizations each year

Additionally, the costs of extra medical care, illness, and death linked to secondhand smoke exposure are over **\$10 billion per year in the United States.**

For additional information on secondhand smoke exposure and what you can do reduce secondhand smoke in your surroundings, please contact the Placer County Tobacco Prevention Program at [Shagen@placer.ca.gov](mailto:Shagen@placer.ca.gov) or (530) 889-7152.