



## What is secondhand smoke?

Secondhand smoke is the smoke exhaled by smokers and the smoke from the burning end of a lit tobacco product. It can contain 7,000 chemicals, 70 of which are known to cause cancer.

### Who does it affect?

Secondhand smoke is hazardous to everyone's health and there is no safe level of exposure. Secondhand smoke exposure is the third leading cause of preventable deaths in the United States and responsible for approximately 49,000 deaths each year.

Exposure to secondhand smoke especially hurts children. Children who are continuously exposed to secondhand smoke may develop asthma or experience asthma symptoms, and are also at increased risk for ear infections, respiratory infections, and overall decreased lung function. Between 7,500 and 15,000 children are hospitalized each year due to infections caused by secondhand smoke. It has also been implicated in over 400 sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) deaths each year.

### How are you exposed?

Most exposure occurs in the home and workplace. In the United States, more than 126 million people who do not smoke are also exposed to secondhand smoke in vehicles and other public places. Hundreds of cities and counties in the have already passed smoke-free air laws, and the numbers continue to grow. Effective January 1, 2008, Illinois became the 22nd state to pass smoke-free legislation. The Smoke-Free Illinois Act prohibits smoking in public places, places of employment, governmental vehicles and within 15 feet of any public doors, windows, and ventilation systems.

### What can you do to protect yourself and your family?

- Make your home and car smoke-free.
- Ask others not to smoke in your home or around your children.
- Ask others to go outside while they smoke.

### Quit for good.

Call 1-866-QUIT-YES

Ask the Quitline about a Courage to Quit® or Freedom From Smoking® class near you.

Visit [www.quityes.org](http://www.quityes.org)

Healthy HotSpot is an initiative led by the Cook County Department of Public Health that aims to build healthy places in suburban Cook County through community partnerships. For more information, visit [healthyhotspot.org](http://healthyhotspot.org).

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