

Second hand smoke



Second hand smoke is dangerous.

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

Second hand 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 and the number of cigarettes smoked. Opening a window does not protect you from smoke. Using ventilation, air conditioning, or a fan does not eliminate passive smoke.¹

Second hand smoke contains more than 4000 chemicals that are dangerous for your health¹

Exposure to second hand smoke can cause:

- smelly clothes and hair
- sore and/or watery eyes
- sneezing and coughing
- sore throat
- 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

Breathing second hand smoke can make you sick. Some of the diseases that second hand smoke causes can kill you.¹

What can you do about it?

- **Protect yourself¹:**
- You have the right to clean air, so politely ask those who smoke to not smoke when they are near you, when you are indoors or in a car;
- If they don't stop smoking, then move away yourself;
- Remind anyone you know who smokes that smoking is not only bad for them, but harms other people too;
- **Make your environment smoke free¹.** Make your house and car smoke free. Put up No Smoking signs to let visitors know it's a smoke free zone.

Australian state and territories have laws that prohibit smoking in workplaces, public places, restaurants and bars. However, millions of children and adults still breathe second hand smoke in their homes, cars, workplaces and in public places.



References

- ¹ The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke. A Report of the Surgeon General. www.cdc.gov/tobacco