

Secondhand Smoke and Asthma

Secondhand tobacco smoke from cigars, cigarettes, and pipes harms the body in many ways. It is especially dangerous to a person with asthma because it triggers asthma attacks and increases the severity of the attacks.

When a person inhales tobacco smoke, irritating substances settle in the moist lining of the airways. These substances can cause a person who has asthma to have even greater difficulty breathing. In addition, tobacco smoke damages tiny hair-like structures in the airways called cilia. Normally, cilia sweep dust and mucus out of the airways but tobacco smoke damages cilia so they are unable to work, allowing dust and mucus to accumulate in the airways. The smoke can also cause the lungs to make more mucus than normal resulting in increased mucus that can clog airways, triggering an attack.



The dangerous particles in secondhand smoke can linger in the air for hours. Breathing secondhand smoke, even for a short time, as little as 20 to 30 minutes, can harm you in a variety of ways. Breathing in secondhand smoke over the years can be all the more dangerous.

Smoke-Free Policy

The development and implementation of smoke-free policies in workplaces and public places protect the employees and the general public from the dangers of secondhand smoke. Smoke-free policies:

- ✓ prompt more smokers to try and quit
- ✓ increase the number of successful quit attempts
- ✓ reduce the number of cigarettes that continuing smokers consume
- ✓ discourage kids from ever starting to smoke.

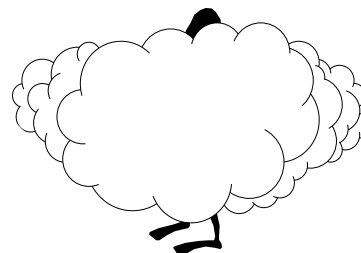
Please take 2 minutes to answer 11 questions to help us better understand the learning needs of our readers. Click [here](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=P5qpMzZiO5Sig871zBf6ww_3d_3d) to take survey Or cut and paste this link into your browser:
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=P5qpMzZiO5Sig871zBf6ww_3d_3d

What's In Secondhand Smoke?

Secondhand smoke contains **more than 4,000** substances, including over 50 known cancer causing chemicals and poisons.

Here are some of the chemicals in secondhand smoke:

- ✓ formaldehyde (embalming fluid)
- ✓ cyanide (poison)
- ✓ arsenic (poison in rat poison)
- ✓ benzene (poison in cleaning solvent)
- ✓ nitro amines (cancer-causing compounds)
- ✓ cadmium (toxic metal)
- ✓ benzopyrene (cancer-causing substance found in gasoline and tar)
- ✓ aniline (poison used in dye)
- ✓ polonium (radioactive materials)



Workers exposed to secondhand smoke on the job are **34 percent more likely** to get lung cancer. Exposure to secondhand smoke can also result in worsened asthma symptoms, poor blood circulation, bronchitis, and pneumonia.

Center for Disease Control

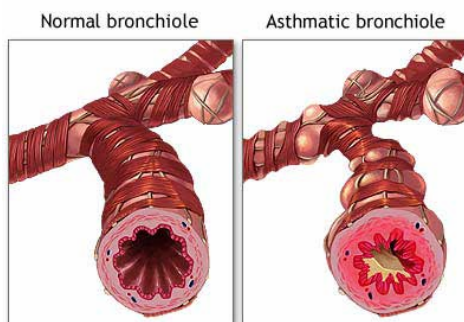
The most significant location of secondhand smoke exposure for adults is **in the workplace**. Experts believe that a large number of the estimated 30,000 to 60,000 secondhand smoke related deaths that occur each year in the U.S. are caused by workplace exposure.

Asthma Initiative of Michigan

A survey conducted in April, 2008 found that **69 percent** of Wisconsin voters support a statewide smoke-free law that includes bars and restaurants.

The Mellman Group
Public Opinion Strategies
April 2008

What is Asthma?



Asthma is a long-standing (chronic) disease where a person's airways are oversensitive and inflamed. During an asthma attack, the airway lining (bronchiole) becomes inflamed, swells and makes more mucus. This narrows the airways and reduces the air flow. The muscles around the airways also tighten and decreases air flow even more.



For more information contact the Marathon County Asthma Coalition at 715-261-1900.