



# EXPOSURE TO SECONDHAND SMOKE

harms our families, resulting in 42,000 deaths annually in the United States (U.S.).

**IN TOTAL, 60% OF U.S. CHILDREN AGED 3–11 YEARS (22 MILLION CHILDREN) AND 40% OF NONSMOKING ADULTS ARE EXPOSED TO SECONDHAND SMOKE.**

**Secondhand smoke causes...**

...sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), acute respiratory infections, ear problems, and more frequent and severe asthma attacks in children (also slows their lung growth).

**Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or at work...**

...increase their risk of developing heart disease by 25–30% and lung cancer by 20–30%.

**Secondhand smoke contains lead...**

...which is particularly harmful to children between 4-16 years old and has been linked to decreased intelligence, impaired growth, anemia, and behavioral and attention disorders.

**There are NO safe levels of secondhand and thirdhand smoke; even brief exposure can damage cells leading to cancer and lung and heart disease.**

Thirdhand smoke is the residual contamination from tobacco smoke that remains on clothing, carpet, furniture, hair and skin long after the smoke clears. It is particularly harmful to infants and children who put their hands in their mouths - ingesting the toxins into their still developing systems.

**Prevention Myths:** steps that are NOT effective to reduce exposure to secondhand and thirdhand smoke:

MYTHS	FACT
Moving to another room to smoke	Smoke enters the ventilation system and spreads and remains throughout the house
Turning on fans and opening windows to remove secondhand and thirdhand smoke	Thirdhand smoke stays in carpet, clothes and bedding
Spraying air freshener	Masking odor doesn’t eliminate secondhand or thirdhand smoke, it simply covers up the smell
Vaping or using e-cigarettes	The aerosol from e-cigarettes are still a source of thirdhand exposure to nicotine

**Here are some tips to protect children from secondhand and thirdhand smoke:**

- **At Home:** If you take care of children in your home, do not allow anyone – including babysitters, family members, or friends – to smoke around your children.
- **In Daycare:** Make sure smoking is not allowed in your child’s day care.
- **At School:** Make sure your child’s school is smoke-free inside and out. All school events should be “No Smoking.”
- **In Public:** Choose restaurants and businesses that are smoke-free. “No Smoking” sections in restaurants do not protect children from secondhand smoke.
- **In Your Car:** Do not allow anyone to smoke if children are riding in your car. Rolling down a window does not protect them.

**How to get help**

- Ask your doctor or substance use counselor for help quitting.
- Call 1-800-Quit-Now for free help.
- Visit [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov) for a step-by-step guide.
- Explore the resources at [www.takingtexastobaccofree.com](http://www.takingtexastobaccofree.com)

A project of Integral Care in Austin and the University of Houston, supported by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas.