

Facts on the health hazards of secondhand tobacco smoke



What's in secondhand smoke?

- Secondhand smoke (SHS) includes both smoke from a burning cigarette, cigar or pipe and smoke exhaled by smokers
- SHS is a complex mixture of more than 4,000 chemicals many of which are strong irritants. These substances include various systemic toxicants, mutagens, and carcinogens, and reproductive and development toxicants. More than 40 of them have been shown to cause cancer.

How Hazardous is it?

- It causes acute reactions in some people, and it can cause damage to otherwise healthy nonsmokers, leading to serious disease, even death.
- For every 8 smokers who die from smoking, 1 nonsmoker dies from exposure to secondhand smoke
- An estimated 750 people die prematurely each year in Oklahoma from exposure to secondhand smoke.
- 53,000 nonsmokers are killed each year by secondhand smoke in the US. It is the third leading cause of preventable death.
- Over 100,000 cases of children's illnesses are caused by secondhand smoke, including respiratory illnesses and ear infections.
- The secondhand smoke caused deaths are primarily from cancer, heart disease and breathing disorders.

Immediate Effects

- Thousands of Oklahomans are unable to go safely to many public places because of the risk of acute reactions to secondhand smoke exposure, including asthma attacks
- Tobacco smoke causes immediate effects in many people such as eye and nasal irritation, headache, sore throat, dizziness, nausea, cough, and respiratory problems.

Children's Diseases

- Children are especially susceptible to secondhand smoke exposure. Their lungs are still developing, and breathe more per pound of body weight than adults do.
- Statistics estimates that every year between 150,000 and 300,000 children less than 18 months old get bronchitis or pneumonia from breathing secondhand smoke. Many of these cases require hospitalization.
- Asthmatic children are especially at risk, and SHS may cause non-asthmatic children to develop the condition. SHS increases the frequency of episodes and worsens the symptoms for up to one million asthmatic children
- SHS can lead to a buildup of fluid and infections in the middle ear, the most common cause of children being hospitalized for an operation.
- SHS has been identified as a cause of low birth weight and of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). A World Health Organization panel concluded in 1999 that maternal smoking causes 1/3 to 1/2 of SIDS cases.

The tobacco lobby wants to turn your children into nicotine addicts and will kill them to make money.