

Passive smoking and children's health



For your kids' sake, never smoke indoors. Take it right outside.

Harmful secondhand smoke contains poisons like carbon monoxide, cyanide and benzene – and lingers for up to 5 hours, waiting for your child to breathe it in.

CARBON MONOXIDE
CYANIDE
LEAD
ARSENIC
BENZENE

For tips on going smoke-free visit smokefreefamilies.co.uk #smokefreefamilies

British Lung Foundation
fresh* Making Smokey History

The risks of passive smoking

Secondhand smoke is a lethal cocktail of more than 4,000 irritants, toxins and cancer-causing substances.

Most secondhand smoke is invisible and odourless, so no matter how careful you think you're being, people around you still breathe in the harmful poisons.

Opening windows and doors or smoking in another room in the house doesn't protect people. Smoke can linger in the air for 2 to 3 hours after you've finished a cigarette, even with a window open. Also, even if you limit smoking to one room, the smoke will spread to the rest of the house where people will inhale it.

The only way to protect your friends and family from secondhand smoke is to keep the environment around them smoke free.

The best way to do that is to quit smoking completely. If you're not ready to quit, make every effort to keep your cigarette smoke away from other people and never smoke indoors or in the car.



Information from:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/passive-smoking-protect-your-family-and-friends/>
- <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/second-hand-smoke.html>
- <https://www.smokefreefamilies.co.uk>



Children and passive smoking

Passive smoking is especially harmful for children as they have less well-developed airways, lungs and immune systems.

Children who live in a household where at least 1 person smokes are more likely to develop:

- asthma
- chest infections – like pneumonia and bronchitis
- [meningitis](#)
- [ear infections](#)
- coughs and colds

Children are particularly vulnerable in the family car where secondhand smoke can reach hazardous levels even with the windows open.

How Can Parents Protect Kids From Secondhand Smoke?

There are fewer smokers now than in years past. Chances are, though, that someone in your family or someone you know still smokes. But it's never healthy for kids to breathe in tobacco smoke. Even occasional or brief exposures can take a toll on the body.

These two rules can help protect your kids (and yourself!) from secondhand smoke:

1. **No smoking inside the house:** Smokers should go outside, away from other people, especially kids and pregnant women. Smoke lingers in the air hours after cigarettes are put out. So even if someone smokes in a room alone, other people will eventually inhale that smoke too.

Smoke also sticks to people and their clothing, furniture, toys, and carpets. This "thirdhand smoke" can't be easily washed away with soap and water. Kids who touch surfaces with thirdhand smoke on them will absorb the dangerous chemicals through their skin and breathe them into their lungs. Smokers should wash their hands and change their clothes after a smoke before they hold or hug children.

2. **No smoking in a car with other people:** Even blowing smoke out the window does little, if anything, to reduce smoke exposure.