

NYC Quits!

Secondhand Smoke

You don't have to smoke to die from it. Secondhand smoke kills!

Secondhand smoke raises a nonsmoker's risk of many diseases, including lung cancer, other cancers, respiratory diseases, eye and nose problems, [heart disease](#) and stroke.

What is it?

Secondhand smoke is made up of 2 kinds of smoke:

1. The smoke released from the burning end of a cigarette
2. The smoke exhaled by the smoker

What's in it?

More than 7,000 chemicals are found in secondhand smoke. At least 250 are harmful and 69 of these are known to cause cancer. Many of these chemicals are included in cigarettes because they help nicotine to reach your brain more quickly – in other words, they make cigarettes even more addictive.

These toxic chemicals include:

- arsenic (a poison)
- benzene (found in gasoline)
- cadmium (used in batteries)
- ethylene oxide (a chemical used to sterilize medical devices)
- vinyl chloride (a poison used in making plastics)



Secondhand smoke kills

Secondhand smoke causes early death in nonsmokers. There is no safe level of secondhand smoke - even brief exposure can be harmful. Each year secondhand smoke kills 38,000 nonsmokers in the United States. Most of these deaths are caused by heart disease or lung cancer.

Children are most vulnerable

- Because their bodies are still growing, infants and young children are more likely to be harmed by secondhand smoke— and the most common source of this exposure is smoking parents.

- [Women who smoke](#) while pregnant and parents who expose their newborns to secondhand smoke raise the risk of many health problems for their babies, including weaker lungs and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Secondhand smoke causes cough, phlegm, wheeze and breathlessness among children.
- Children exposed to smoke are at greater risk for ear infections and are more likely to need tubes inserted in their ears.
- In children who already have [asthma](#), secondhand smoke makes attacks more severe and frequent.



Protect those around you

- If you are a smoker, the best way to protect your family from secondhand smoke is to quit smoking.
- [Make your home and car smoke-free](#). Smoking near an open window, an air conditioner or a fan does not fully protect people from secondhand smoke. Smoking in a separate room does not fully protect them either.
- Never smoking is the only way to fully protect those around you from the poisons in secondhand smoke.

