



Secondhand Smoke

An estimated 38,112 lung cancer and heart disease deaths annually are attributed to exposure to secondhand smoke (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2005). Secondhand smoke also contributes to respiratory diseases and other health problems. In 2000, more than 126 million U.S. residents ages 3 years and older were exposed to secondhand smoke; for most, the home was the primary site of exposure (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2006). The risk for exposure extends beyond the immediate family. Smokers living in multifamily residences (such as apartment and condominium complexes) can affect not only family members, but other residents as well.

The best way to maintain a smoke-free house is to refrain from smoking. In addition, adopting smoke-free rules in homes reduces involuntary exposure to secondhand smoke and improves health. Opening a window; sitting in a separate area; or using ventilation, air conditioning, or a fan cannot eliminate secondhand smoke exposure. The only way to fully protect yourself and your loved ones from the dangers of secondhand smoke is through 100% smoke-free environments. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2006).

(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2009.)