

When the smoke clears

Protecting the nonsmokers in your life

Even if you know smoking is bad for you, you still might not be ready to quit. But have you thought about the people around you who don't smoke? Your smoking is bad for them too. The smoke you exhale and the smoke that burns from a cigar, cigarette or pipe is called "secondhand smoke," and the nonsmokers around you can inhale it. It's as if they are smoking too.

SECONDHAND SMOKE-RELATED ILLNESSES

Secondhand smoke contains the same chemicals as the smoke inhaled from tobacco products. Over time, inhaling that smoke can cause tobacco-related illnesses, such as heart disease, lung disease or cancer. In children, secondhand smoke causes the following¹:

- ear infections;
- more frequent and severe asthma attacks;
- coughing, sneezing and shortness of breath;
- lung infections such as bronchitis or pneumonia;
- a greater risk of experiencing sudden infant death syndrome.

HOW CAN YOU HELP THOSE AROUND YOU?

What can you do to keep the nonsmokers around you safe?

Set up a "no-smoking zone." Decide that you are never going to smoke in your house or in your car. And don't let anyone else smoke in your smoke-free zone.

Don't smoke around your children. Children of parents who smoke are twice as likely as other children to become smokers.² Tell babysitters, nannies or day care workers that you do not want your child exposed to smoking.

When you go out, choose restaurants and other public places that are smoke free. It's not good enough to sit in the "no-smoking" section of a building in which smoking is allowed; secondhand smoke travels throughout the building.

Teach your children that smoking comes with health risks, including a risk of developing cancer, heart disease and lung disease.

If you are a nonsmoker, protect yourself from second-

hand smoke by avoiding areas where smoking is allowed and helping your loved ones who smoke to kick the habit. A U.S. government website called smokefree.gov offers these tips to help people quit smoking³:

- Set a quit date, after which you will not smoke again.
- Let other people in on your plan; tell friends and family members that you plan to stop smoking and let them know your quit date.
- Get rid of everything that reminds you of smoking; throw away lighters, matches, ashtrays and, of course, all tobacco products. Clean out your house, car and desk at work.

Make a list of everything that makes you want to smoke, and write down one thing you can do to avoid these triggers or to help you resist the urge to smoke when you encounter them.

Nobody wins when there is smoke in the air. Do what you can to protect your loved ones from the smoke you exhale and the smoke that burns from your cigar, cigarette or pipe. Even better, take on the challenge and quit smoking. Make your life and the lives of everyone around you smoke free. ■

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1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Secondhand Smoke (SHS) Facts. Health effects: children. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/general_facts/index.htm. Accessed July 24, 2014.

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Tobacco use: smoking & secondhand smoke. September 2010. CDC Vital Signs. www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/TobaccoUse/SecondhandSmoke/index.html. Accessed July 24, 2014.

3. smokefree.gov. Have you built a quit plan? <http://smokefree.gov/quit-plan>. Accessed July 24, 2014.