

## Smoking Hurts Everyone

How does living with a smoker harm my children?

Many people think that the only people harmed by tobacco use are smokers who have smoked for a long time. The fact is that tobacco use can be harmful to everyone. This includes unborn babies and people who don't smoke. If you smoke cigarettes, cigars, or pipes, or use smokeless tobacco like chew and snuff, the best thing you can do for yourself and for everyone around you is quit.

### Smoking harms infants and children

When parents expose their children to smoke, or let others do so, they are putting their children's health in danger and sending a message that smoking is OK.

Secondhand smoke is the smoke a smoker breathes out. It's also the smoke that comes from the tip of lit cigarettes, pipes, and cigars. It contains about 4,000 different chemicals, many of which cause cancer. Because of exposure to secondhand smoke, about 3,400 nonsmokers die from lung cancer every year and 22,000 to 69,000 nonsmokers die from heart disease every year.

Breathing in smoke can cause:

- Asthma
- Respiratory infections (like bronchitis and pneumonia)
- Lung problems
- Ear infections
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) (for babies younger than 1 year)

The best way to protect infants and children from smoke is to make your home and car smoke free all the time.

### Smoking harms unborn babies

Smoking during pregnancy or exposing pregnant women to smoke can lead to many serious health problems for an unborn baby, such as:

- Miscarriage
- Premature birth (born not fully developed)
- Lower birth weight than expected (possibly meaning a less healthy baby)
- SIDS
- Learning problems and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

### Smoking harms teens

Every day thousands of teens try smoking for the first time. About one third of them will die of a smoking-related disease. Other teen smokers may experience the same health problems as adult smokers, including:

- Addiction to nicotine
- Long-term cough
- Faster heart rate
- Lung problems
- Higher blood pressure
- Less stamina and endurance
- Higher risk of lung cancer and other cancers
- More respiratory infections

Smoking also gives you bad breath, yellow teeth, and yellow fingernails; makes your hair and clothes smell bad; and wrinkles your skin.

### Smoking harms adults

Smoking is the most preventable cause of death in the United States. Think about the following facts:

- Every year in this country about 438,000 people die from diseases related to smoking. According to the American Cancer Society, smoking kills more people than alcohol, car crashes, suicide, AIDS, murder, and drugs combined.
- Smoking causes 87% of lung cancer deaths. Lung cancer is the leading type of cancer in men and women.
- In addition to cancer, smoking also causes heart disease, stroke, chronic lung problems, and many other diseases.

### It's time to quit!

Thousands of Americans have found a way to stop smoking. You can too. People who quit smoking live longer, healthier lives. They look and feel better. They save money and are great role models for others. Most importantly, they can help improve the health of their children and other family members.

For more information, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics Julius B. Richmond Center Web site at [www.richmondcenter.org](http://www.richmondcenter.org).