



Poisoning Our Children: The Unknown Dangers of Second-hand Smoke⁷

Second-hand Smoke, also known as Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS), is one of the world's leading public health concerns. Everyday, non-smokers are inhaling harmful tobacco-related chemicals whether they choose to or not. What's more – second-hand smoke can be more toxic than smoke inhaled by a smoker.

Infants and small children are especially affected by second-hand smoke, due to the fact that their young internal organs are still developing. Second-hand smoke directly worsens diseases and even creates new ones when there was none before.

It's vital to know the facts about second-hand smoke and its effects on children.

Each year, Second-hand Smoke is responsible for:

- 15,000 children having to be hospitalized^{1, 2, 4}.
- 26,000 new cases of asthma in children^{1, 2, 4}.
- 150,000 - 300,000 lung infections, such as bronchitis and pneumonia, in children less than 18 months old^{1, 2, 4}.
- 40% of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) due to mothers smoking during and/or after pregnancy or another person smoking in the house. Researchers have proven that babies who were exposed to second-hand smoke, or whose mothers smoked during pregnancy, were at higher risk of crib death, also known as SIDS. SIDS infants had noticeably higher levels of nicotine in their lungs than normal infants².
- Permanent damage to lung function in children and symptoms of breathing-related diseases in usually healthy children³.

Tobacco Odors...

- Certain chemicals actually help the bad odors to hold onto the surface that they penetrate⁶.
- **Even the smell of smoke on clothes can trigger asthma symptoms in a child with sensitive airways – smoking in the home of a child with asthma can be life threatening and is unacceptable³.**
- Tobacco odors cling to people's clothes, hair, and even their skin. Second-hand smoke residue clings to skin and can easily be absorbed by children through simple contact¹.
- Contamination in a household can be so intense that when someone smokes in an air-conditioned room, the air-conditioning demands can jump as much as 600 percent in order to control the odors¹.
- Smokers themselves usually are not sensitive to these odors because the smoke from their own cigarettes destroys the inner linings of their nose¹.

Second-hand Smoke and Breastmilk

- Nicotine from second-hand smoke has been found in the milk of exposed non-smokers⁴.
- Nicotine enters readily into mothers' milk and has a half-life of close to two hours. That means it takes about two hours for 50 percent of it to clear your system⁴.

House Dust

- Levels of nicotine and other smoke-related chemicals in house dust in the homes of smokers are higher than that in homes of nonsmokers. Children are forced to inhale or ingest this dust, causing greater health problems⁷.

Second-hand Smoke in a vehicle:

- A child spending only one hour in a smoke-filled vehicle may be exposed to as much dimethyl-nitrosamine, a very potent cancer-causing chemical, as if he or she had actually smoked 17- 35 filter tip cigarettes⁷.

**OF THE 4,000 CHEMICALS FOUND IN TOBACCO, MORE THAN 50 CAUSE
CANCER!**

Why Children Develop...

Ear Infections

The toxic chemicals in smoke irritate the lining of the eustachian tube, which leads from the back of the nose to the ear. The irritated lining creates mucous which collects behind the eardrum. The ear may become infected and cause pain or hearing loss. Surgery and the insertion of drainage tubes are necessary in many cases⁷.

Pneumonia

Children have very small airways; when an air-way is irritated by smoke, mucous is produced. Sometimes one drop of mucous can close a child's airway and cause it to become infected⁷.

Asthma

Irritants in tobacco smoke can cause the lining of the airways to swell making it difficult for a child to breathe. **Even the stale odor of past smoking in a car can trigger an asthma attack in a child⁷.**

SECONDHAND SMOKE KILLS OVER 50,000 AMERICANS EACH YEAR!

Sources:

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