Protecting My Child from Secondhand Smoke

Fact Sheet for Parents

What is secondhand smoke?

Secondhand smoke is a mixture of the smoke that comes directly from a cigarette and the smoke that a person breathes out while smoking. Secondhand smoke contains many poisons and is a major cause of indoor air pollution.

How does secondhand smoke affect my child?

Children who are exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to get chest infections such as pneumonia and bronchitis, asthma attacks and ear infections (compared to children who live in homes where people do not smoke). Later in life, they are more likely to get cancer as a result of being exposed to smoke in childhood, even if they do not become smokers themselves (though they are more likely to become smokers).

Remember!
There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

What can I do to protect my child's health?

- Be a good role model for your children – by not smoking.
- Make your home a smokefree home and ask friends and family to smoke outside.
- Avoid smoking or allowing others to smoke near your children, in your home or car.
- If you need help in stopping smoking, ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice.
- If you are a smoker who wants to cut down, try using nicotine replacement therapy, especially when you are with your children.
- Do not smoke while pregnant or near to someone who is pregnant.

Top Tips on Quitting Smoking

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice on quitting or call one of the freephone advice lines for help:
  NHS: 0800 169 0169
  QUIT: 0800 002200

- Try using nicotine patches, gum or other nicotine-based products such as lozenges or inhalers. Or ask your doctor about medicines that can help you quit. All of these aids are proven to double the chances of quitting compared to going 'cold turkey'.

- Make a list of the benefits of quitting – for example, the money you will save, feeling fitter, smelling fresher, cleaner home, etc.

- Tell your friends and family that you are stopping smoking so that they can offer support. If you live with someone else who smokes consider quitting together.

- For more information on secondhand smoke or advice on stopping smoking see: www.ash.org.uk

- If you are not yet ready to stop smoking but want to cut down, consider using nicotine replacement therapy (such as nicotine patches or gum) as an alternative to some of the cigarettes you would normally smoke.

Other benefits of a smokefree home:

- ✓ A cleaner, fresher home
- ✓ Reduced risk of fires
- ✓ Cost savings on cleaning and redecorating

ash. action on smoking and health
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