

SECONDHAND SMOKE & HEART DISEASE

FACT SHEET

The link between breathing *Secondhand Tobacco Smoke* and disease is well-known, and its connection to cardiovascular-related disability and death is clear.

Heart Disease & Heart Attacks ¹⁻¹¹

- Secondhand smoke is a major preventable cause of cardiovascular disease and death according to the American Heart Association, The U.S. Surgeon General, Centers for Disease Control and many other prominent public health authorities.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke causes nearly 10 times as many deaths from heart and blood vessel diseases as it does from cancer.
- Each year in the U.S., secondhand smoke causes 49,000 heart disease deaths.
- Past scientific studies have shown that people living or working in an environment polluted with secondhand smoke have an increased risk for a heart attack.
- Constant exposure to secondhand smoke (in the workplace or home) nearly doubles the risk of having a heart attack, according to a study of more than 32,000 women.
- People who have never smoked have an estimated 30% greater risk of heart disease if they live with a smoker. This is almost half the risk of smoking 20 cigarettes daily, even though the exposure to tobacco smoke is only 1% of that of a smoker.
- As little as 30 minutes of breathing secondhand smoke puts certain individuals at greater risk of heart attack. The Centers for Disease Control warns that people with known heart disease should avoid all indoor environments that permit smoking.

Stroke ¹²⁻¹³

- Breathing secondhand smoke increases the risk of stroke in non-smokers.
- Regular exposure to secondhand smoke, such as in restaurants and bars, increases one's chance of stroke by as much as 50 percent.
- There exists a strong dose-response between breathing secondhand smoke and the risk of a stroke.¹²⁻¹³ This means that even breathing smaller amounts of secondhand smoke can produce changes in the cardiovascular system significant enough to increase the risk of stroke – some studies have shown this risk to nearly double in healthy people!

Vascular Problems, Damage to Arteries ¹⁴⁻¹⁵

- Breathing secondhand smoke for just a few minutes increases arterial stiffness, promotes the tendency of blood to clot, reduces blood flow to the heart, and makes arteries more prone to damage.

Smoke-free Indoor Air Laws Protect Against Heart Disease ¹⁶⁻¹⁷

- Recent studies in Helena, MT and Pueblo, CO observed immediate and significant reductions in heart attack admissions at primary local hospitals AFTER smoke-free indoor air ordinances were enacted within the city limits.

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Did You Know?

- ☞ In January 1993, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency declared secondhand smoke a known human carcinogen. The EPA calls secondhand smoke a serious and substantial health risk for nonsmokers - *particularly children.*



What is Secondhand Smoke?

- ☞ Secondhand smoke is a mixture of the smoke given off by the burning end of a cigarette or other tobacco product and the smoke exhaled by smokers.¹⁸⁻²⁰
- ☞ Secondhand smoke is hazardous and contains a mixture of more than 4,000 chemicals – many of them toxic. The cardiovascular system is very sensitive to these toxins which are known to cause HEART DISEASE, damage to the arteries and other parts of the cardiovascular system.¹⁸⁻²⁰
- ☞ The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that breathing secondhand smoke is a public health hazard, yet is completely preventable. A person's exposure can be dramatically reduced by eliminating smoking in all enclosed public places and workplaces.^{18-20, 21}

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