

# Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke

## What is secondhand smoke?

Secondhand smoke is a mixture of smoke from burning cigarettes or other combustible products and exhaled smoke in the air. It contains over 7,000 chemicals, including more than 70 that can cause cancer, and other harmful substances.<sup>1</sup> Secondhand smoke is classified as cancer-causing agent by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).<sup>2</sup>

## Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke among Adults<sup>1,3,4</sup>

The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.<sup>3</sup> Exposure to secondhand smoke can cause numerous health problems, including:

- Lung cancer
- Coronary heart disease
- Stroke
- Nasal irritation.

## Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke on Children<sup>1,3,4</sup>

Among children, exposure to secondhand smoke can cause:

- Middle ear diseases
- Respiratory symptoms such as coughing or wheezing and impaired lung function
- Lower respiratory diseases like bronchitis and pneumonia
- More frequent and severe asthma attacks
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- Low birth weight among children whose mothers are exposed to secondhand smoke while pregnant.

## Deaths Due to Secondhand Smoke

- In the United States, secondhand smoke is estimated to cause over 41,000 deaths among non-smokers each year, including nearly 34,000 deaths from heart disease and over 7,300 deaths from lung cancer.<sup>1</sup>
- In Indiana, secondhand smoke was estimated to cause 1,337 deaths among non-smokers in 2014, including 1,325 deaths among adults and 12 deaths among infants and children.<sup>5</sup>

## Costs of Secondhand Smoke

Secondhand smoke is estimated to cost Indiana about \$2.1 billion annually in excess medical expenses and premature loss of life. This equates to about \$328 per person each year.<sup>5</sup>

## Quick Facts

Secondhand smoke contains over **7,000 chemicals**, including over **70 that cause cancer**.<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.<sup>3</sup>

Secondhand smoke causes lung cancer, heart disease, and stroke among nonsmokers.<sup>1,3</sup>

Secondhand smoke is estimated to cause over **1,300 deaths** among Hoosiers each year.<sup>5</sup>

Secondhand smoke costs Hoosiers an estimated **\$2.1 billion** in health care costs and premature death annually.<sup>5</sup>

Secondhand smoke is responsible for over **41,000 deaths** in the United States each year.<sup>1</sup>

About **1 in 4 nonsmokers** nationwide are exposed to secondhand smoke.<sup>6</sup>

About **2 in 5 children** nationwide are exposed to secondhand smoke.<sup>6</sup>

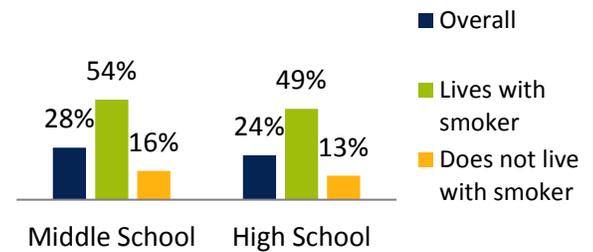
# Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke

## Prevalence of Secondhand Smoke Exposure<sup>6</sup>

Secondhand smoke exposure may occur in multiple places, including the home, public places, worksites, and vehicles. In the United States, an estimated 1 in 4 nonsmokers (25%) were exposed to secondhand smoke in 2011-2012. Secondhand smoke was far higher, however, among several groups, including:

- Children ages 3-11 years (41%)
- African Americans (47%)
- Individuals living in rental housing (37%)
- Individuals living in poverty (43%).

**Percentage of Indiana students exposed to secondhand smoke at home during the past seven days, 2018<sup>7</sup>**



## Secondhand Smoke Exposure among Indiana Youth<sup>7</sup>

- In Indiana, approximately 1 in 4 middle and high school students were exposed to secondhand smoke at home in 2018.
- Students who lived with smokers were far more likely to report secondhand smoke exposure at home than students who did not live with a smoker.
- While about 89% of Hoosier youth who do not live with smokers report that smoking is never allowed in their home, just over half of youth who live with smokers (62%) report that smoking is never allowed in their home.

## Disparities in Protection from Secondhand Smoke

All Hoosiers are currently protected by a statewide law that prohibits smoking in most workplaces and restaurants. Only about 31% of Hoosiers, however, are covered by a comprehensive smoke-free air law that includes workplaces, restaurants, and bars. Additionally, several venues such as gaming facilities and clubs may be exempt from smoke-free air laws. Nationwide, people working in blue-collar and service jobs are less likely to be protected by smoke-free policies and more likely to be exposed to secondhand smoke.<sup>8</sup>

## Protecting Hoosiers from Secondhand Smoke

The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that only 100% smoke-free environments can completely eliminate secondhand smoke exposure.<sup>3</sup> Hoosiers can help protect themselves, their children, and their communities from secondhand smoke by:

- Not allowing smoking in their homes or vehicles
- Educating community members, businesses, and community leaders about the benefits of tobacco-free environments including workplaces, public places, schools, and multi-unit housing.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Respiratory Health Effects of Passive Smoking: Lung Cancer and Other Disorders. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Office of Health and Environmental Assessment, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke. December 7, 2016. Accessed December 12, 2016 from [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/secondhand\\_smoke/health\\_effects/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/health_effects/).

<sup>5</sup> Lewis CK, Zollinger T. Estimating the Economic Impact of Secondhand Smoke in Indiana in 2014. Cynthia K. Lewis & Associates, LLC. 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Homa DM et al. Vital signs: Disparities in nonsmokers' exposure to secondhand smoke – United States, 1999-2012. *MMWR* 2015; 64(04): 103-108.

<sup>7</sup> Indiana Youth Tobacco Survey, 2018

<sup>8</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Secondhand Smoke (SHS) Facts. December 1, 2016. Accessed December 12, 2016 from [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/secondhand\\_smoke/general\\_facts/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/general_facts/).

Updated 06/18/2019