

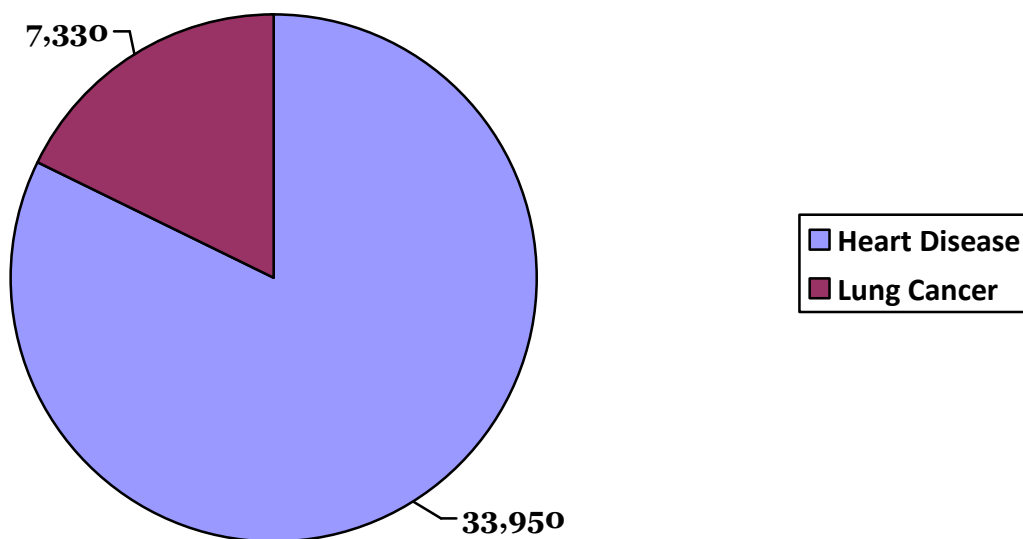
Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke

What is Secondhand smoke?

Secondhand smoke is a mixture of side stream smoke from burning cigarettes or other combustible products and exhaled smoke in the air. Exposure to secondhand smoke is one of the leading causes of preventable death. Secondhand smoke has been shown to cause heart disease, cancer, respiratory problems and eye and nasal irritation. Exposure to secondhand smoke takes place in the home, public places, worksites and vehicles. Secondhand smoke is classified as a Group A carcinogen (cancer causing agent) under the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) carcinogen assessment guidelines. It contains over 7,000 chemicals, including more than 70 carcinogens and other irritants and toxins.

- Each year in the United States, over 41,000 adult deaths are attributable to secondhand smoke breathed by nonsmokers.
- Of these deaths, over 7,000 are due to lung cancer and approximately 34,000 are due to heart disease.

41,280 Annual Deaths from Secondhand Smoke, 2005-2009



- In Indiana each year, approximately 1,426 people die prematurely from exposure to secondhand smoke, including 1,409 adults and 17 infants and children.
- Secondhand smoke costs Indiana approximately \$1.3 billion in excess medical expenses and premature loss of life, or about \$201 per person each year.

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Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke on Children

- Studies show that older children whose parents smoke get sick more often. Their lungs grow less than children who do not breathe secondhand smoke, and they get more bronchitis and pneumonia.
- Children whose parents smoke around them get more ear infections. They also have fluid in their ears more often and have more operations to put in ear tubes for drainage.
- Secondhand smoke can trigger an asthma attack in a child. Children with asthma who are around secondhand smoke have more severe and frequent asthma attacks. A severe asthma attack can put a child's life in danger.
- Secondhand smoke exposure causes numerous health problems in infants and children, including more frequent and severe asthma attacks, respiratory infections, ear infections, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Protecting Your Children from Secondhand Smoke

The U.S. Surgeon General says there is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure. Smoke-free environments are the most effective way to fighting exposure to secondhand smoke.

- Pledge not to smoke in your home and car and do not allow family and visitors to do so. Infants and toddlers are especially vulnerable to the health risks from secondhand smoke.
- Do not allow childcare providers or others who work in your home to smoke.
- Until you can quit smoking, smoke outside. Moving to another room will not eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Smokers trying to quit smoking are more successful in quitting if they have a smoke-free home.

Smoke-free air policies are growing in Indiana. Many communities are educating the public of the dangers of secondhand smoke and the need for smoke-free air policy.

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