

## FACT SHEET

# Secondhand Smoke

## What is secondhand smoke?

Secondhand smoke is the smoke given off by the burning end of tobacco products (cigarettes, cigars, pipes, etc.) and the smoke exhaled by the smoker. There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke. Any exposure to tobacco smoke - even an occasional cigarette or exposure to secondhand smoke - is harmful.

## Why is secondhand smoke so dangerous?

- Non-smokers absorb the same nicotine and other poisonous chemicals that smokers do
- Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals; hundreds are known to be toxic and about 70 can cause cancer
- The more you are exposed to secondhand smoke, the greater the level of harmful chemicals in your body

## What are the health effects of secondhand smoke?

- Heart disease and heart attacks
- Lung cancer, breast cancer, and other cancers
- Respiratory infections and other lung health problems
- Asthma and more frequent and severe asthma attacks
- Ear infections and eye and nose irritation
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)

## How can you protect yourself and others from secondhand smoke?

- Quit smoking and help those around you quit
- Free help is just a phone call away - NH Tobacco Helpline 1-800-Quit-Now (784-8669)
- Make sure your home and car are smoke-free and caregivers do not smoke around your children
- Visit smoke-free restaurants and public places
- Teach children how to politely ask people not to smoke around them
- If your workplace is not smoke-free, ask your employer to consider a smoke-free business policy

