

Secondhand Tobacco Smoke

Tobacco

Taking care of your health includes being aware of, and comfortable with, the air you breathe. That is why understanding the danger of secondhand tobacco smoke is so important.

What is secondhand smoke?

Secondhand smoke is a combination of:

- the smoke from the burning ends of cigars, cigarettes, and pipes, **and**
- the smoke exhaled by someone who is smoking.

Secondhand smoke contains more than 4,000 known poisons. In Iowa, over 500 people die each year from exposure to secondhand smoke.

People in my office smoke; should I be concerned for my health?

Yes. Workers exposed to secondhand smoke are 34% more likely to get lung cancer.

Every year, more than 53,000 non-smokers die from exposure to secondhand smoke.

Is it harmful to my health to eat in a restaurant that allows smoking?

Yes. Even restaurants that have separate smoking and nonsmoking sections cannot eliminate your exposure to poisons from secondhand smoke.

Restaurants that allow smoking can have six times the pollution of a busy highway.

What are the benefits of a smoke-free home?

You will remove all the health risks associated with secondhand tobacco smoke. Your home will smell much better and you will spend less time, energy, and money cleaning curtains, walls, windows, and mirrors.



What can I tell my employer or favorite-restaurant owner about the benefits of a smoke free workplace?

Talk with your employer about the benefits of a smoke-free workplace policy:

- Cost savings from fewer days off due to illness and less time spent on breaks
- More than half of all Americans choose smoke-free restaurants over ones that allow smoking
- Possible reduced cost of life, health, and fire insurance
- Less time and money spent on cleaning and replacing smoke-damaged office furniture and equipment
- Improved employee morale -- most employees want a nonsmoking policy
- Owners of restaurants allowing smoking could be liable if an employee develops an illness from breathing secondhand smoke
- The office becomes a good environment for smokers who want to quit

Write a letter or talk directly with the manager or owner of your favorite restaurant. Let them know that more than half of all Americans choose smoke-free restaurants over ones that allow smoking (National Restaurant Association). Surveys also show that 80 to 90 percent of nonsmokers ask to be seated in nonsmoking section of a restaurant when one is available.

For more information about secondhand smoke or other Understanding Series fact sheets, call 515-281-6225.

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