

## SECONDHAND SMOKE IN THE HOME

Do you think that secondhand smoke is annoying but not really harmful?

Think again . . .

### **Secondhand smoke is the third leading cause of preventable death in Montana.**

Secondhand smoke is a combination of the smoke that curls from the smoldering part of a cigarette, cigar or pipe plus the smoke breathed out by a smoker. Unfiltered, it contains high concentrations of toxins.

### **Why is secondhand smoke especially dangerous for children?**

Children are more at risk than adults because they breathe two to three times more pollutants for every pound of body weight than adults do. And, because their small bodies are still growing, secondhand smoke poses a serious threat to normal development of children's lungs.

### **The health risks are serious!**

- Babies whose caregivers or parents smoke are twice as likely to die from **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome**.
- Secondhand smoke increases the frequency of respiratory infections. **Pneumonia and acute bronchitis** are twice as common in young children whose parents smoke at home. These infections result in up to 15,000 hospitalizations yearly of U. S. infants and children younger than 18 months of age.
- Children exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to have **breathing problems**—more coughs, excess phlegm, wheezing, and stuffy noses. And when they have a cold, they will be sick longer, and miss more school days than children from smoke-free homes.
- Children who breathe secondhand smoke have more **ear infections**. It can lead to the build-up of fluid in the middle ear, the most common cause of hospitalization of children for an operation.
- **Asthma** is twice as common in children exposed to high levels of secondhand smoke. Living with parents who smoke worsens the disease for children causing more asthma attacks and more severe episodes. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that secondhand smoke causes between 8,000 and 26,000 new cases of childhood asthma a year.

### **What can you do to protect your children?**

- If you smoke, try not to smoke around your kids—**GO OUT FOR YOUR KIDS!**
- Better yet, try to quit--it's better for your health too!
- Don't allow smoking in the car.
- Ask friends, relatives, and other visitors not to smoke around your kids. It isn't always easy to do, but try saying "the smoke is very bad for my child's health."
- Choose family activities where your children won't be exposed to smoke.

- Educate your family, friends and neighbors about the dangers of secondhand smoke.

**Websites with more information:**

[Protect Montana Kids](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

[Environmental Protection Agency](#)