

“Thank you for not smoking”

When you smoke, everyone near you smokes

It is now clear that tobacco is linked with many health problems in addition to lung disease and cancer. As our knowledge about the health consequences of smoking grows, these health concerns have also been extended to the innocent bystanders (those who regularly encounter secondhand smoke).

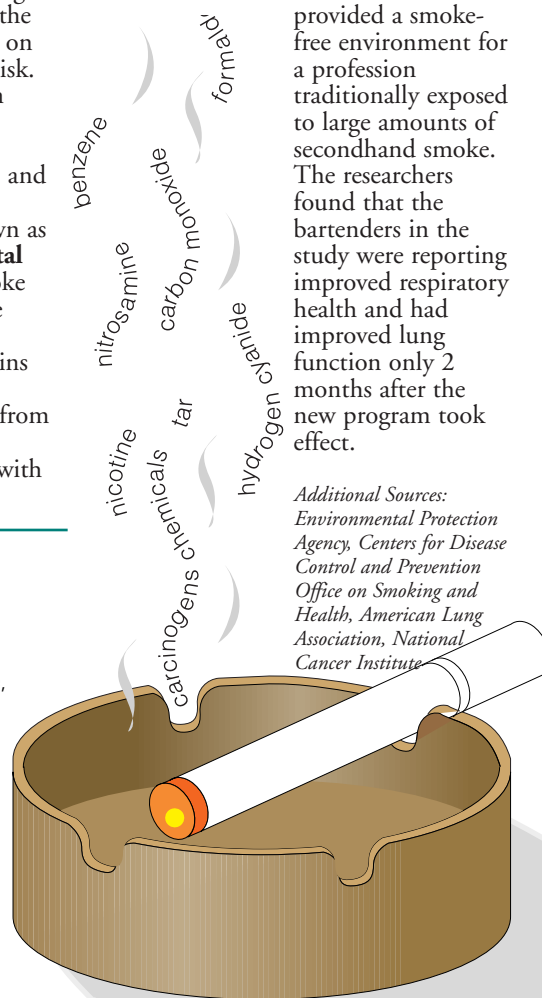
In 1964, the U.S. Surgeon General's office issued its first report on the health risks associated with smoking. Less than 10 years later, in 1972, the same office put out its first report on secondhand smoking as a health risk. Secondhand smoke has since been associated with many of the same health problems as smoking: respiratory problems, lung cancer, and cardiovascular and heart disease.

Secondhand smoke, also known as **passive smoking** or **environmental tobacco smoke (ETS)**, is the smoke from the burning tobacco and the smoke exhaled by the smoker. Harmful chemicals, including toxins and **carcinogens** (cancer-causing substances) are released in the air from the burning end of a lit cigarette. These airborne chemicals, mixed with the smoke exhaled by the smoker,

create a toxic environment for anyone in close proximity to the smoker. Secondhand smoke has been classified a Group A carcinogen by the EPA. Group A is a rating used only for substances proven to cause cancer in humans.

The December 9, 1998, issue of *JAMA* reports on the observable health benefits to bartenders from a new California law that prohibits smoking in bars. The law provided a smoke-free environment for a profession traditionally exposed to large amounts of secondhand smoke. The researchers found that the bartenders in the study were reporting improved respiratory health and had improved lung function only 2 months after the new program took effect.

Additional Sources:
Environmental Protection Agency, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Office on Smoking and Health, American Lung Association, National Cancer Institute



DANGERS OF SECONDHAND SMOKE:

- Smoke from a burning cigarette contains many carcinogens, chemicals, and toxins, including tar, carbon monoxide, hydrogen cyanide, phenols, ammonia, formaldehyde, benzene, nitrosamine, and nicotine.
- Smoke from a burning cigarette is unfiltered and contains twice as much tar and nicotine as the smoke a smoker inhales through a filter.
- A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) study concluded that each year approximately 3,000 nonsmokers' deaths from lung cancer are due to secondhand smoke.

DANGERS FOR INFANTS AND CHILDREN:

- Studies have shown that mothers who smoke are at a higher risk of having a baby with low birth weight.
- There is an association with higher incidence of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and mothers who smoke.
- Children with asthma who are exposed to secondhand smoke on average have more intense and more frequent episodes of asthma.
- Children exposed to secondhand smoke also appear to be at higher risk for respiratory problems such as asthma, bronchitis, colds, middle-ear disorders, pneumonia, and reduced lung function.
- Secondhand smoke has been estimated to cause up to 300,000 children in the United States to suffer from lower respiratory tract infections.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF:

- Do not allow others to smoke in your home and, if possible, at your workplace.
- Do not allow smoking near children or persons with asthma.
- Do not allow smoking in closed compartments such as a car. (This greatly increases the concentration of dangerous chemicals and toxins from secondhand smoke.)
- Minimize time spent in smoky environments, such as bars and the homes of people who smoke.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Office on Smoking and Health
4770 Buford Highway, NE, Mail Stop K-50
Atlanta, GA 30341-3724
800/CDC-1311
or www.cdc.gov/tobacco
- National Cancer Institute
Building 31, Room 10A24
Bethesda, MD 20892
800/4-CANCER
or www.nci.nih.gov

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