

Car and home smoke free zone

Passive smoking is breathing in other people's smoke. It affects smokers and non-smokers. The process of smoking produces three different types of tobacco smoke:

1 Mainstream smoke

Smoke directly inhaled by the smoker through a burning cigarette, cigar or pipe.

2 Exhaled mainstream smoke

Smoke breathed out by the smoker.

3 Sidestream smoke

Smoke which drifts from the burning end of a cigarette.

Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) is the combination of exhaled mainstream smoke and sidestream smoke.¹

Sidestream smoke contains many cancer-causing chemicals and other toxic substances. In some cases their levels are thirty times higher than in the smoke inhaled by the smoker.² For example, compared to mainstream smoke, sidestream smoke contains greater amounts of ammonia, benzene, carbon monoxide, nicotine and some carcinogens from the same amount of burnt tobacco.¹ The health effects of exposure to passive smoking are well known. It increases the risk of lung cancer and heart disease as well as throat and chest infections.^{1,3,4}

Children are especially vulnerable to passive smoking. Passive smoking by infants is a risk factor for SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or cot death).^{3,5,6,7} The children of parents who smoke also have higher rates of lower respiratory illnesses such as croup, bronchitis, bronchiolitis and pneumonia during their first 18 months of life compared to children of non-smokers.^{3,5,6} Children in this age group exposed to tobacco smoke have higher rates of admission to hospital.^{3,8,9}

Children of smokers also show a small lowering in lung function⁵ with some evidence indicating that this reduced ability of lung function may even persist into adulthood.⁵ Children exposed to passive smoking are more likely to suffer from asthma in childhood.^{3,5,6}

Children of smokers are more likely to contract 'glue ear' (otitis media), which is an infection and swelling of the ear.¹ Passive smoking increases the risk of meningococcal disease among children, which can sometimes cause death, mental disability, hearing loss, or loss of a limb.¹⁰ Exposure to tobacco smoke also makes children more vulnerable to lung complications during and after surgery involving a general anaesthetic.^{11,12}

However, over 80 per cent of homes in NSW are now smoke-free and most enclosed public places in NSW are by law also smoke-free.¹³ Under the *Public Health Tobacco Act 2008* it is against the law to smoke in a car when a child under 16 years of age is present. This law came into effect on 1 July 2009. Bans on smoking in your home and car will not only increase your chances of quitting successfully, but others will also benefit from less exposure to passive smoking.

Smoking with kids in the car is now illegal

The NSW Government introduced a new law to protect children from second-hand tobacco smoke. The *Public Health Tobacco Act 2008* creates a new offence of smoking in a car with a child under 16 years of age in the vehicle. The Act, which came into effect on 1 July 2009, imposes a \$250 on-the-spot fine to the driver and any passenger who breaks the law. NSW Police enforce the ban on smoking in cars with children.

Additional fact sheets on the impacts of second-hand tobacco smoke and the ban on smoking in cars when children are present can be found at: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/publichealth/health promotion/tobacco/pdf/a5_smoke_free_cars_factsheet.pdf](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/publichealth/health%20promotion/tobacco/pdf/a5_smoke_free_cars_factsheet.pdf) or by contacting the Tobacco Information Line on 1800 357 412.



Going smoke free

Steps to make your home smoke free are:

- 1 Get household members to agree on a date for the house to become smoke free.
- 2 Remove ashtrays and lighters from indoor areas.
- 3 Display 'no smoking' stickers on the fridge and at the front door.
- 4 Ask smokers to smoke outside when they visit.

Steps to make your car smoke free are:

- 1 Clean out the ashtray and remove the cigarette lighter.
- 2 Display 'no smoking' stickers on the dashboard or ashtray.

It is important to remember that strategies such as smoking in only one part of the house or blowing smoke out an open car window are not effective. There are invisible gases in tobacco smoke that spread quickly to all areas of the house and car. See the fact sheet **Nicotine and other poisons** for more information. To avoid exposure, make your car and home smoke free.

Smoke free stickers

Smoke free stickers that say '**Car and Home Smoke Free Zone**' are available from the Better Health Centre – (02) 9879 0443. Further information is available from the **Car and Home Smoke Free Zone website – www.smokefreezone.org**

For further information contact:
Tobacco Information Line

1800 357 412

If you would like to quit smoking contact the **Quitline 131 848** or speak with your doctor or pharmacist.
Visit the website: www.quitnow.info.au

References

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