

# Secondhand Smoke

## Pre-reading

Questions: What is secondhand smoke?

Why is it harmful?

Definitions: Exhale – to breathe out

Expose – to put in harms way



[www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov) image

## Reading

15 Most everyone knows that smoking is harmful, but the effects of secondhand smoke are not  
28 as clearly understood. Secondhand smoke, which is also called environmental tobacco smoke, is  
46 the combination of smoke that is exhaled by a smoker and the smoke that comes from the burning  
61 end of a tobacco product. Most secondhand smoke comes from cigarettes, but some also comes  
76 from pipes and cigars. With secondhand smoke, people are exposed to smoke without choosing to  
smoke themselves.

78 Many times when people are exposed to secondhand smoke it is against their will. Children  
93 are especially at risk for being exposed to it against their wishes. People can breathe secondhand  
109 smoke in their homes, cars, at work, and at places such as bars and restaurants. Recently many  
126 new laws have **banned** smoking in public places. This has helped reduce the effects of  
141 secondhand smoke.

143 Secondhand smoke has many harmful effects. There are over 250 harmful chemicals found  
156 in secondhand smoke; 50 of these are cancer causing chemicals. According to the U.S. Surgeon  
171 General and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, secondhand smoke causes lung cancer in  
184 nonsmoking adults. It is also linked to many other forms of cancer. It is important to make people  
202 aware of this, especially smokers, so that there can be a continued effort to reduce secondhand  
218 smoke exposure.

220 In addition to cancer, secondhand smoke can cause other health problems. The smoke can  
234 irritate airways and damage the heart and blood vessels. It increases the risk of heart disease, and  
251 there may also be a link between secondhand smoke and strokes.

262 Children who are exposed to secondhand smoke have additional risks. For these kids, there  
276 is an increased risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), ear infections, colds, bronchitis,  
290 pneumonia, and asthma. Secondhand smoke exposure for kids even slows the growth of their  
304 lungs and causes coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath. Smoking should never occur around  
318 children, especially in enclosed areas.

323 There is no excuse for putting innocent nonsmokers at risk to the harmful effects of  
338 smoking. Positive changes to protect against the danger of secondhand smoke have begun. More  
352 efforts need to follow in order to stop the terrible effects of smoking.

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## Understanding

1. How is the exposure to secondhand smoke different from actually smoking? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What does the word “**banned**” mean in this reading? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. Why do you think that children are especially at risk to being exposed to secondhand smoke against their wishes? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. How have some of the new laws helped to protect people against secondhand smoke? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. What are some of the effects of secondhand smoke? (List at least three.) \_\_\_\_\_  
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6. Where could a person learn more about smoking and secondhand smoke? \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. How could helping smokers understand the risks of secondhand smoke help in the fight to reduce the risk of this problem? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Tell about a time when you and/or your children were exposed to secondhand smoke. Where did it happen? How did you feel at the time? How do you feel about it now?

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