

There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke. Even low levels of exposure to secondhand smoke are dangerous.



Breathe New Hampshire has served the people of New Hampshire for over 90 years. Through education, advocacy, research, and partnerships, we are working to eliminate lung disease and improve the quality of life for those living with lung disease in New Hampshire.

We invite you to join us as a volunteer, partner, or donor, so that we can continue to strengthen our efforts.



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# Secondhand Smoke



THE BASIC FACTS



## What is secondhand smoke?

Secondhand smoke is the smoke that comes from burning tobacco products.

Non-smokers absorb the same nicotine and other poisonous chemicals that smokers do. Secondhand smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including over 70 that cause cancer. *The more you are around secondhand smoke, the greater the level of these harmful chemicals in your body.*



Some of the chemicals in secondhand smoke include:

- Formaldehyde
- Benzene
- Vinyl chloride
- Arsenic
- Ammonia
- Hydrogen cyanide

## Why is secondhand smoke so dangerous?

Secondhand smoke can cause many serious health problems, including:

- Heart disease and strokes
- Lung cancer, breast cancer, and other cancers
- Heart attacks
- Respiratory infections and other lung problems
- Asthma
- More frequent and severe asthma attacks
- Ear infections
- Eye and nose irritation

## Who is hurt most by secondhand smoke?

Although everyone is hurt by secondhand smoke, it is especially bad for:

- Anyone with lung disease, such as asthma or COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)
- Pregnant women, who are more likely to have babies with low birth weight and/or diseases
- Infants, who are more likely to die from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- Children, who have lungs that are still growing and who breathe in more air than adults



Children exposed to secondhand smoke have more ear infections, pneumonia, bronchitis, and more severe and frequent asthma attacks.

Studies also show that being exposed to secondhand smoke may cause asthma in children under five.

For more information, visit our website at [www.breathenh.org](http://www.breathenh.org) or call 1.800.835.8647.