



KENDALL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Secondhand Smoke (SHS)

- SHS is a mixture of the smoke exhaled by a smoker and the smoke that comes from the burning end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar. 85% of this smoke lingers in the air for others to breathe and unfortunately contains over 4,000 chemicals.
- The Environmental Protection Agency has classified SHS as a Group A carcinogen (known to cause cancer in humans).
- More than 50 chemicals in SHS are known to cause cancer.
- SHS chemicals include irritants, and systemic toxicants, mutagens, carcinogens, and reproductive and developmental toxicants.
- SHS exposure causes lung and nasal sinus cancer, heart disease, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.
- Serious impact of SHS on children include asthma induction and exacerbation, bronchitis and pneumonia, middle ear infection, chronic respiratory symptoms, and low birth weight.
- SHS is the third leading cause of preventable death in the country, killing 53,000 nonsmokers in the U.S. each year.
- SHS is a major source of particulate matter pollution- a risk factor for pulmonary disease, asthma, and lung cancer. Three cigarettes smoldering in a room emits 10 times more particulate matter pollution than an ecodiesel engine.
- An average of 43% of U.S. children ages 2 months to 11 years, live in homes with at least one smoker. SHS is particularly harmful to these young children as well as the unborn child.
- SHS is as damaging to a fetus as if the mother were inhaling the smoke directly from a cigarette.
- Mothers who smoke at least 10 cigarettes a day can cause between 8,000-26,000 new cases of asthma among children each year.