

The Evidence is Clear: Secondhand Smoke is Harmful

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For more than two decades, the nation's most respected health organizations have come to the same conclusions about secondhand smoke: it's dangerous and deadly. Each year, the body of evidence continues to grow.

World-renowned health organizations have concluded that secondhand smoke is a significant health danger:

American Medical Association
U.S. Surgeon General
Mayo Clinic
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

National Cancer Institute
American Lung Association
World Health Organization
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Over the past 20 years, hundreds of scientific studies have shown the dangers associated with secondhand smoke. A few of the most noteworthy include:

- 1986:** The U.S. Surgeon General released one of the first studies on the dangers of secondhand smoke. It reported that involuntary smoking is a cause of disease, including lung cancer, in healthy non-smokers.¹
- 1992:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency concluded that widespread exposure to secondhand smoke is a serious and substantial public health danger. Specifically, it reported that secondhand smoke is a human lung carcinogen, responsible for 3,000 lung cancer deaths a year in U.S. non-smokers.²
- 1997:** A National Cancer Institute monograph linked significant health effects, including coronary heart disease, nasal sinus cancer and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome with exposure to secondhand smoke.³
- 2006:** The U.S. Surgeon General released the most comprehensive scientific report ever produced on the health harms of secondhand smoke. The report states that “massive and conclusive scientific evidence documents adverse effects of involuntary smoking on children and adults, including cancer and cardiovascular diseases in adults, and adverse respiratory effects in both children and adults.” The report further concludes that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.⁴

New research shows secondhand smoke is even more dangerous than previously believed.

- 2004:** A Helena, Montana, study made a connection between secondhand smoke and heart disease. The study observed that hospital admissions for heart attacks declined by approximately 40 percent during a six-month period during which a comprehensive smoke-free air law was in effect, and rebounded after the ordinance was suspended.⁵ In 2005, a similar study conducted in Pueblo, Colo., confirmed the findings from Helena.⁶ As a result of the Helena study, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a warning, saying that people at risk of heart disease should avoid exposure to secondhand smoke.⁷

¹ The Health Consequences of Involuntary Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 1986.

² Respiratory Health Effects of Passive Smoking: Lung Cancer and Other Disorders. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 1992.

³ Monograph 10: Health Effects of Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke. National Cancer Institute. 1999.

⁴ The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2006.

⁵ Sargent RP, Shepard RM, Glantz SA. Reduced Incidence of Admissions for Myocardial Infarction Associated with Public Smoking Ban: Before and After Study. University of California. 2004.

⁶ Bartecchi C, Alsever R, Nevin-Woods C, Thomas, WM, Estacio R, Bartelson B, Krantz M. Reduction in the Incidence of Acute Myocardial Infarction Associated With a Citywide Smoking Ordinance. *Circulation*. 2006.

⁷ Pechacek TF, Babb S. How acute and reversible are the cardiovascular risks of secondhand smoke? *BMJ*. 2004.