

FACTS

Clearing the Air

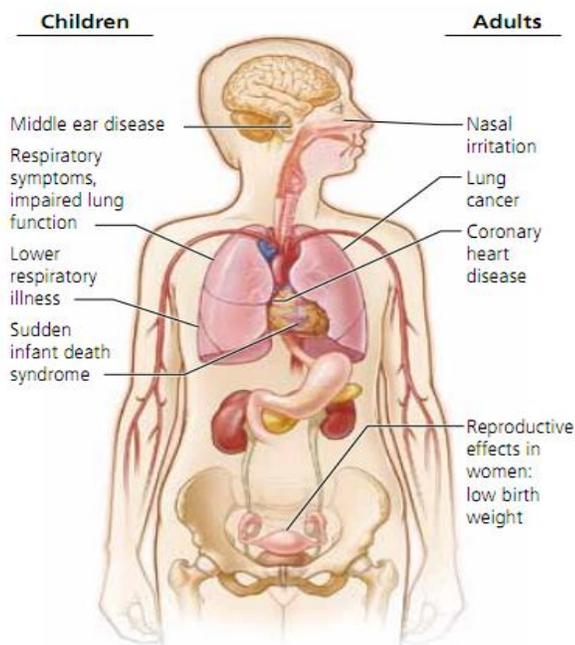
Comprehensive Smoke Free Air Laws Across the U.S.

OVERVIEW

Cigarette smoking continues to be the second leading cause of preventable disease and death in the U.S. claiming approximately 480,000 lives prematurely every year.¹ In the last 50 years, an estimated 20 million Americans have died prematurely due to tobacco-caused illnesses.¹ Smoking not only claims the lives of those who use tobacco, but also those who are exposed to second-hand smoke.

Smoking costs the U.S. economy around \$289-333 billion per year including \$150 billion in workplace productivity losses of, and \$133-175 billion in direct medical expenditures.¹ Tobacco control efforts have contributed to a decline in U.S. cigarette consumption by 30% since 1969.¹ The decline in smoking rates, however, has flattened since 2007.¹ In fact, 19% of men and 15% women still smoke.¹

Figure 1: Diseases Caused by Second-Hand Smoke



Source: CDC
http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/health_effects/index.htm

While second-hand smoke exposure has decreased over time, more than 20% of nonsmoking adults in the U.S. are still exposed to second-hand smoke, which can contribute to an array of diseases.^{2,6,16} (Figure 1) People with a lower socioeconomic status are disproportionately exposed to second-hand smoke, with children especially at risk.^{2,3,4} According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), second-hand smoke, also referred to as environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), can migrate between public housing units, causing or worsening respiratory illness, heart disease, cancer and asthma in neighboring families.¹¹ As of March 2016, a new proposed HUD rule requiring public housing agencies administering public housing to implement a smoke-free policy was still under consideration.

Advocating for comprehensive smoke free air laws at the state and local level is a pillar of the American Heart Association's tobacco control advocacy efforts. To be effective, these laws should comply with the Fundamentals of Smoke-free Workplace Laws guidelines. The latter helps maximize the impact of smoke free policy efforts and increase the number of people protected from second-hand smoke.⁵

A CLOSER LOOK AT SECOND-HAND SMOKE

Research shows that smoking bans lead to marked reductions in cardiovascular incidents.^{6,8} Some studies have suggested that brief exposure to second-hand smoke can damage the lining of blood vessels, cause blood platelets to become stickier, and lead to a deadly heart attack.¹ Evidence suggests that comprehensive smoke free laws may reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke hospitalizations by 15% and 16% respectively.^{7,8} Other effects of second-hand smoke include:

- Nearly 34,000 premature deaths from heart disease each year in the United States among nonsmokers.

- Increased risk of developing heart disease by 25–30% for nonsmokers who are exposed to second-hand smoke.¹
- Increased risk for stroke of 20–30%.¹ Preliminary research has suggested an association between dementia syndromes in adults and exposure to secondhand smoke.⁹

HEALTH, ECONOMICS AND SECOND-HAND SMOKE

The hospitality and tobacco industries contend that business suffers with the passage of smoke-free laws. Increasing evidence from municipalities, states, and countries where these laws have been passed show an insignificant impact on sales data and in many instances business actually increases.¹⁵ Additional benefits for businesses are lower cleaning costs, lower worker absenteeism, and increased productivity.¹⁵ Other economic data to consider include:

- The costs for lost productivity associated with diseases caused by second-hand smoke exposure is estimated at over \$5 billion a year.¹
- The health and economic burden of passive smoking in the U.S. will be cut by approximately 25%–30% annually if recent trends in the prevalence of passive smoking continue.¹ This potential reduction in second-hand smoke has important ramifications for lowering Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance costs.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Approximately 58 million persons are exposed to second-hand smoke each year with the greatest exposure among children, non-Hispanic blacks, those living in poverty, and those who rent their housing.¹³ A total of 36 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia have laws that require smoke free workplaces, restaurants and bars.¹⁰

THE ASSOCIATION ADVOCATES

Comprehensive smoke free laws that prohibit smoking in all indoor areas of worksites and public places, including restaurants, bars and casinos, improve air quality and reduce exposure to second-hand smoke.¹⁴ The American Heart Association advocates for a 100% indoor smoke free environment and supports the following:

- Smoke free air laws that are comprehensive and apply to all indoor workplaces and public environments.
- No preemption of local ordinances.
- No exemptions for hardship, opting out, or ventilation.

- No exemptions for casinos and gaming organizations, bars, or private clubs.
- Comprehensive smoke free policies in multi-unit housing where children, adolescents, the elderly and the disabled are especially vulnerable.

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