



## Dangers of Secondhand Smoke

**There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke<sup>1</sup>**

According to the U.S. Surgeon General (2010) any level – even brief exposure of secondhand smoke is dangerous and can be harmful.<sup>1</sup>

### Harmful Effects of Secondhand Smoke:

- Secondhand smoke causes an estimated **46,000 premature deaths** from heart disease & **3,400 lung cancer deaths** in the United States among nonsmokers annually.<sup>2</sup>
- Exposure increases the risk of lung and other cancers, heart disease, emphysema, asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (C.O.P.D.).<sup>3</sup>
- Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk of:
  - Sudden infant death syndrome
  - Ear infections
  - More frequent & severe asthma attacks
  - Colds, pneumonia, bronchitis<sup>3</sup>
- It causes or exacerbates respiratory tract infections, such as pneumonia and bronchitis, especially in infants, children and older persons.<sup>3</sup>
- It is a major health threat to persons with asthma and can be fatal.<sup>3</sup>

There are over **7,000** identifiable chemicals in secondhand smoke. At least **69** of these chemicals cause cancer.<sup>1</sup>

Secondhand smoke cannot be controlled by ventilation, air cleaning or the separation of smokers from non-smokers. The only solution to this problem is to make buildings 100% smoke-free.

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1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease and Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2010. (<http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>).

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses – United States, 2000-2004*. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2008; 59(35) (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5745a3.htm>).

3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006. (<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/report/>).