

## Third Hand Smoke

Second hand smoke isn't just harmful to people who smoke, but it is also seriously harmful to those who aren't smoking. This is because the non-smoking individuals who are exposed to second hand smoke are breathing in the same nicotine, tar and toxic chemicals (250 toxic chemicals, as well as 69 known carcinogens) that the active tobacco users are. Although second hand smoke seems dangerous enough, what many people don't know about are the harmful effects of *third hand smoke*.

Third hand smoke is the "left-over" tobacco smoke contamination that sticks to the tobacco user's clothes and skin, as well as carpets, walls and other surfaces. Third hand smoke remains long after second hand smoke has cleared. In places where smoking is frequent (cars, bars, restaurants, etc.) the tobacco toxins continuously build up, lasting for weeks, months, or even years.

So just how dangerous is third hand smoke? The residue left behind by second hand smoke (third hand smoke) can contain heavy metals, carcinogens and even radioactive materials. Young children who crawl across carpets and touch contaminated surfaces are most likely to ingest these harmful toxins. However, anyone who comes into contact with third hand smoke-covered surfaces can ingest many of these dangerous toxins. Third hand smoke can be especially dangerous for children and teens with asthma, because third hand smoke particles combined with pollution in the air can lodge themselves deep in the lungs. These particles can be even more harmful than nicotine itself.

Every day, about 4,000 teens aged 12-15 start using tobacco, and research has shown that adolescents with parents who smoke are more likely to smoke themselves (*Child and Teen Tobacco Use*, 2009). Tobacco users have three times more cavities than non-tobacco users, and teens who smoke get sick more frequently, and often have smaller lungs and weaker hearts than non-tobacco users. Now is the time to talk to your teens about tobacco use and its harmful effects. Educate them on the dangers of using tobacco, as well as the harmful effects of exposure to second hand and third hand smoke. In the event that your teen is in a situation where second hand and third hand smoke might be present it is important that you have encouraged them to make healthy choices for themselves. Give them the knowledge to make safe choices when it really counts. As a parent, you can lead by example and teach your teen to be aware of second hand and third hand smoke and take steps to protect themselves.

Because you care, protect your teens. Get involved and share your knowledge with them.

Call 1-866-NEW-LUNG for FREE help to quit tobacco

A one-month supply of FREE nicotine patches is available to adults 18 and older who complete all 5 quitting tobacco classes. Available only while supplies last.

Sources:

<http://www.youngwomenshealth.org/smokeinfo.html>

<http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/CancerCauses/TobaccoCancer/secondhand-smoke>

<http://www.livescience.com/health/thirdhand-smoke-asthma-risk-100817.html>