

Facts for Residents of Apartments and Condominiums About Tobacco Smoke

What Do You Know About Secondhand Smoke in Apartments and Condominiums and How Does it Affect Your Family?

The smoke that comes off the end of the cigarette is very dangerous. Secondhand smoke has twice as much nicotine and tar as the person smoking inhales, and has five times more carbon monoxide, a deadly gas that starves your body of oxygen.

The U.S. Surgeon General says there is no amount of exposure to secondhand smoke that is safe. The California Air Resources Board says secondhand smoke is even dangerous outside; it can cause cancer, heart disease, asthma, and other illnesses.

Smoke-filled rooms can have six times the air pollution of a busy highway.

- Tobacco smoke contains 7,000 chemicals including formaldehyde, cyanide, arsenic, benzene and radioactive polonium-210.
- More people (about 50,000) die of secondhand smoke each year in the U.S. than from auto accidents, suicide, AIDS, drunk driving, murders, alcohol and illegal drugs.

Did You Know?

- Secondhand tobacco smoke doesn't always stay in the apartment of the person who is smoking.
- Surveys of apartment residents in California show that as many as 46% had tobacco smoke drift into their apartment from another unit or from outside.
- Secondhand smoke can move through the plumbing, through cabinets and closets, heating and air conditioning systems, and even through microscopic cracks in walls and floors.
- Secondhand smoke can come into an apartment from outside through open windows and doors. Sometimes it can even come in when windows are closed.

Pregnant Women and Children

Secondhand smoke may cause a pregnant woman to lose the baby. Also, tobacco smoke can cause Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Secondhand smoke can cause low birth weight and birth defects.

Infants and very young children who breathe secondhand smoke are more likely to get lung infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia. These cause thousands of hospitalizations each year, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Smoking around children can cause ear infections, chronic coughing, colds, and asthma.

Most people begin to smoke around the age of thirteen. Ninety percent of adults who smoke began before they were nineteen years old.

It is fair to say that illnesses caused by smoking begin in childhood.