

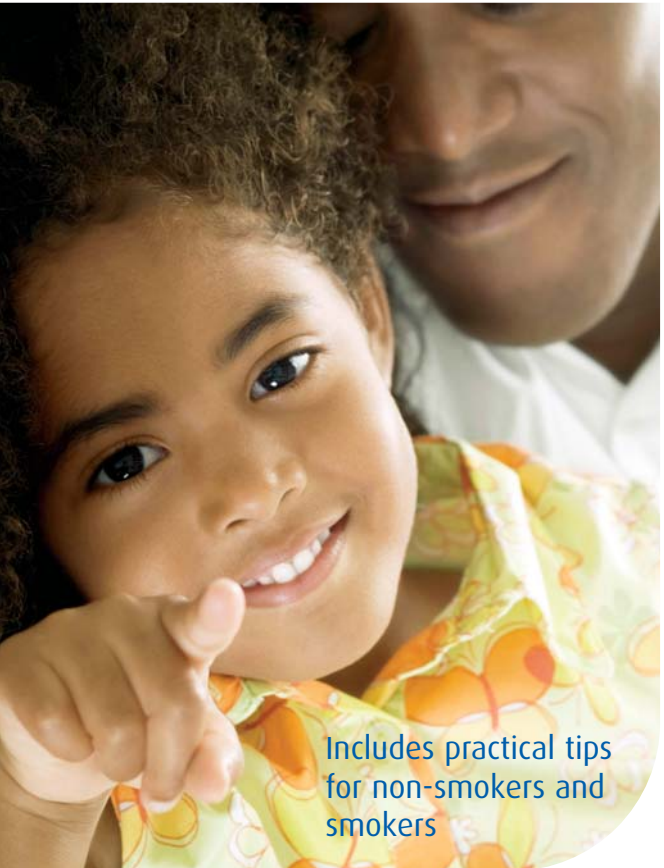


Canadian  
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# Clear the Air

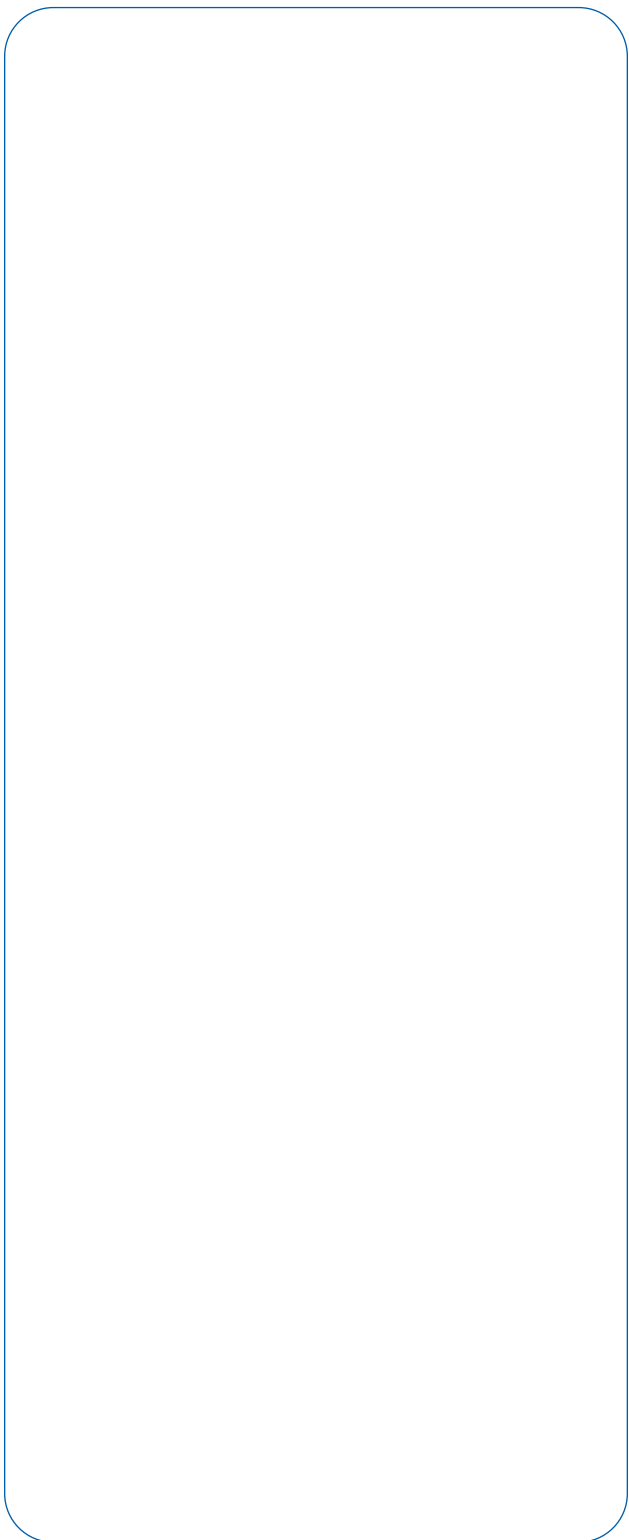
*Protect yourself and your family  
from second-hand smoke*



Includes practical tips  
for non-smokers and  
smokers

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## Second-hand smoke is dangerous

When a person smokes near you, you breathe in second-hand smoke. Many of us breathe it in whether we know it or not, in public places, around doorways of buildings and at work. When someone smokes inside a home or car, everyone inside breathes second-hand smoke.

Chemicals found in second-hand smoke include carbon monoxide (found in your car's exhaust), ammonia (found in window cleaners), cadmium (found in batteries) and arsenic (found in rat poison).

Cigarettes produce about 12 minutes of smoke, yet the smoker may inhale only 30 seconds of smoke from their cigarette. The rest of the smoke lingers in the air for non-smokers and smokers to breathe. Second-hand smoke contains more than 4000 chemicals. Many of these chemicals are known to cause cancer.

Each year, more than 1000 non-smoking Canadians die from second-hand smoke.

This pamphlet is about the dangers of second-hand smoke. It also tells you what you can do to protect your health and the health of your family, including practical tips for smokers and non-smokers.

### **What is second-hand smoke?**

Second-hand smoke is the smoke from a burning cigarette, pipe or cigar. It is also the smoke exhaled by a smoker.

## Second-hand smoke makes you sick

No amount of second-hand smoke is safe.

Second-hand smoke causes sore eyes and throat, nasal irritation, headaches, coughing and wheezing, nausea and dizziness. You are also more likely to get colds and the flu. Breathing in second-hand smoke can also trigger asthma attacks and increase your chances of getting bronchitis and pneumonia.

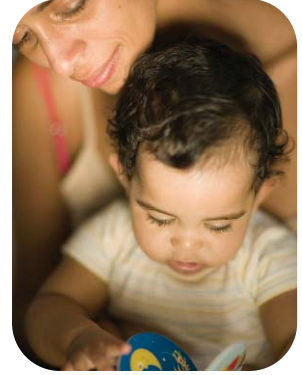
If you have been exposed to second-hand smoke for a long time, you are more likely to develop and die from heart problems, breathing problems and lung cancer.

Children, pregnant women, older people and people with heart or breathing problems should be especially careful to avoid second-hand smoke.



## Second-hand smoke hurts babies

Second-hand smoke can harm babies before and after they are born. Several chemicals in second-hand smoke can pass into your baby's blood, affecting how your unborn baby develops.



If you smoke or are around second-hand smoke while you are pregnant, you are more likely to:

- miscarry
- deliver early
- experience problems during labour

Also, babies exposed to second-hand smoke before they were born are more likely to be small and less healthy. They are also at a higher risk of dying during childbirth or dying of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).

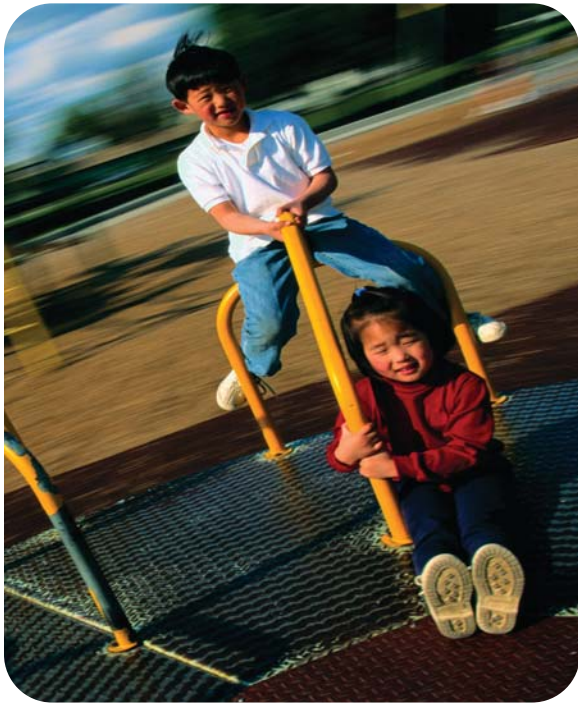
If you're breast-feeding, keep in mind that some chemicals from second-hand smoke are passed directly from breast milk to the baby.

If you smoke, consider quitting before you get pregnant. Mothers who don't smoke are healthier. They have easier pregnancies and labours, and faster recoveries after giving birth. If you are already pregnant, try to quit as soon as possible. Ask your doctor for help.

## Second-hand smoke hurts older children too

Children are more at risk of getting sick than adults when they breathe in second-hand smoke because their bodies are still growing. They breathe faster than adults, so they absorb more harmful chemicals. Children's immune systems, which protect them from getting sick, are not yet fully developed.

Children have less control over their surroundings than adults do. Unlike adults, children are less likely to leave smoky places by themselves. Some children may not feel comfortable complaining about second-hand smoke.



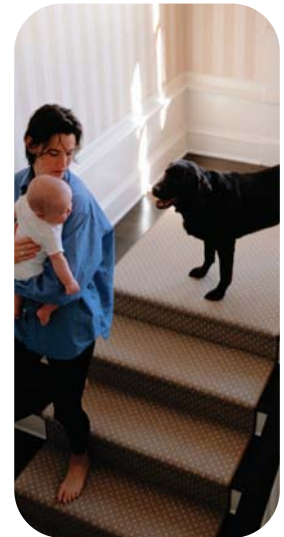
Compared to children of non-smokers, children who regularly breathe in second-hand smoke are more likely to suffer from:

- coughing and wheezing
- painful ear infections
- asthma and other breathing problems
- bronchitis, croup and pneumonia

They are also more likely to have a higher risk of heart disease and to take up smoking themselves.

## Don't forget about pets

Your pets are also at risk. Cats, dogs and other animals who regularly breathe in second-hand smoke have a greater chance of getting cancer. Because smoke particles can cling to their fur, they may also ingest smoke particles when grooming themselves with their tongues.



## Protect yourself and your family from second-hand smoke

### At home

Because Canadians spend most of their time indoors, your home's air quality is important. Even after a cigarette is out, second-hand smoke remains on your clothes, carpet, curtains and furniture and is still toxic to your family and pets. Opening a window or turning on a fan or air purifier is not enough to clear the air.

#### What you can do:

- Think about how you are going to make your home smoke-free. Talk about it with your family and friends.
- Politely ask your family members and friends to smoke outside. Sit outside or go for a walk with them so they know you're not rejecting them, just the smoke.
- Set up a comfortable area, preferably outdoors, for smokers to use. Remove all ashtrays from inside your home.
- If you are a smoker, ask your doctor for help to quit. *Smokers' Helpline* or our *One Step at a Time* program can also help you quit.
- If you live with a smoker, be supportive of their efforts to quit. However, be firm about your right to a smoke-free home, especially if you are pregnant or have children.

### Apartments or condominiums

If you live in a multi-unit building where the ventilation system is shared, smoke can enter your unit through vents and openings. Second-hand smoke can also drift under doors and through cracks and air leaks around electrical outlets, plumbing and windows.

#### What you can do:

- Install special seals for electrical outlets, which are available at hardware stores, to prevent smoke from entering.
- Install door sweeps to prevent smoke from entering your unit.
- Seal cracks around vents and windows with foam insulation.
- Talk to your neighbours. Tell them that you're interested in working together to reduce second-hand smoke.
- Read your rental agreement. If all or part of your building is smoke-free, ask the landlord to enforce the rules.
- Talk to your landlord or condo association about making your floor or building smoke-free.
- If all else fails, consider moving to a smoke-free building.

## In your car



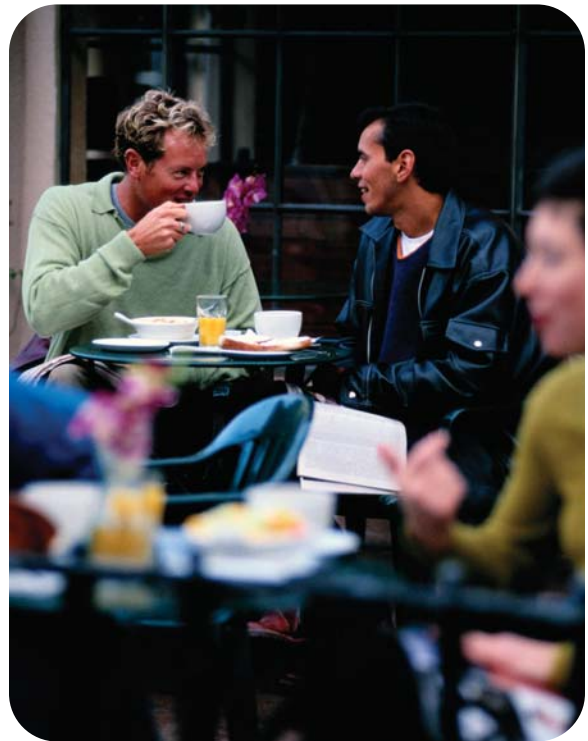
Second-hand smoke is even more dangerous inside the small air space in your car because the smoke is more concentrated. The chemicals remain in the car, even when the tobacco is no longer burning.

### What you can do:

- Let all your passengers know that your car is smoke-free.
- Give your car a good cleaning. Vacuum the upholstery.
- Clean out the ashtray. Fill it with change or gum.
- Instead of smoking in your car, try to leave work or home a few minutes earlier than usual so you have time to smoke outside before getting into your car.

## Away from home

- Avoid places where your children will be exposed to second-hand smoke.
- Talk to your employer about ways of making your workplace smoke-free.
- When travelling, ask for smoke-free rooms.
- Support businesses that are smoke-free. Let other businesses know that you won't support them until they become smoke-free.
- Support local bylaws and campaigns that restrict smoking.



## Protect children from your second-hand smoke

If you do smoke, consider quitting. Your children will be healthier if you do. Even if you don't smoke around your children, smoke can still cling to your hair, clothing, furniture and the inside of your car.

If you have to smoke:

- Always smoke outside far away from children.
- Never smoke in the car. Opening a window does not protect children from smoke. Smoke before you begin your journey. On long car trips, stop and smoke outside away from children.
- Make sure you put out your cigarette before going near children.
- Clear away ashtrays to keep children from playing with cigarette butts.
- Never leave a lit cigarette, lighters or matches unattended.

Children who live with smokers are much more likely to start smoking themselves. Smoking is a hard habit to break, so encourage your children never to start. If your child smokes, take his or her addiction seriously. Offer help to quit.

## Ready to quit or just thinking about quitting?

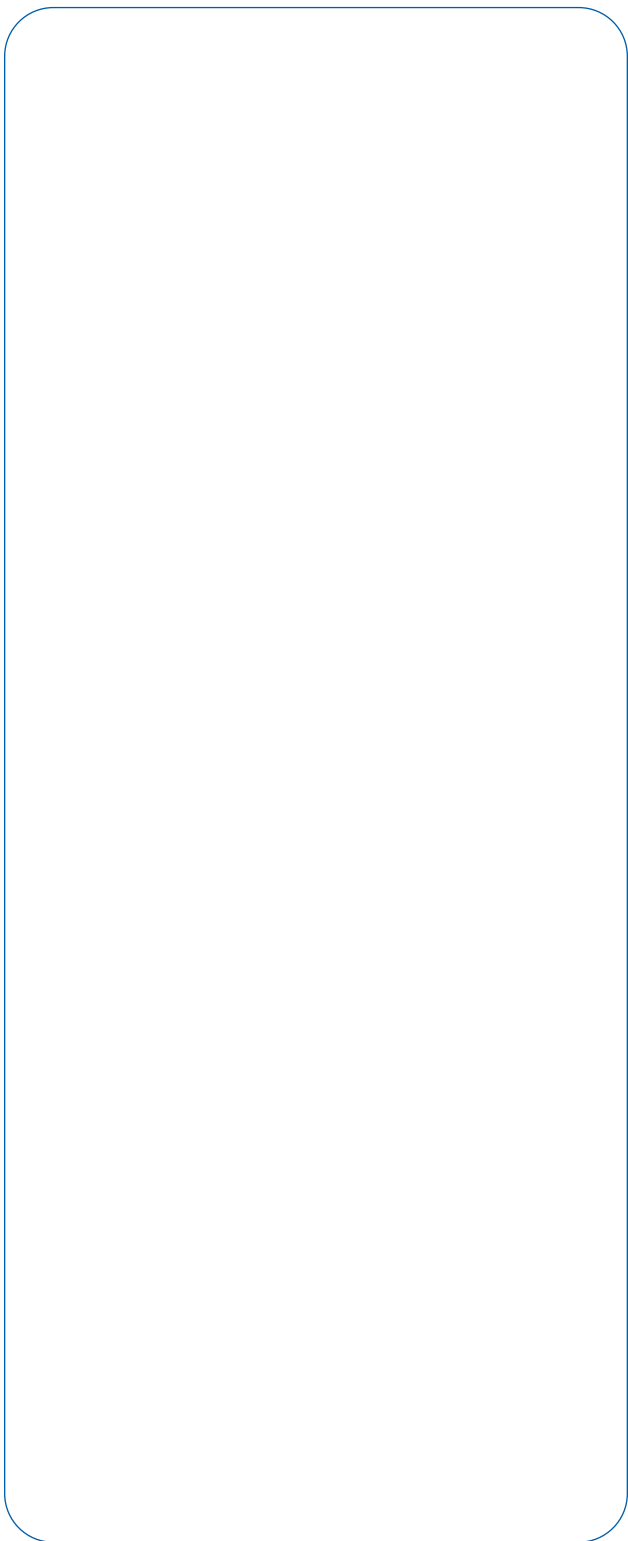
Quitting smoking isn't easy, but the Canadian Cancer Society can help. We can get you started by sending you a copy of *For Smokers Who Want to Quit: One Step at a Time*, our quit guide for smokers. We can also tell you about *Smokers' Helpline* and refer you to programs and services in your community.

Call us toll-free at **1 888 939-3333**,  
e-mail us at [info@cis.cancer.ca](mailto:info@cis.cancer.ca) or  
visit our website [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca).









## What we do

Thanks to the work of our volunteers and staff, and the generosity of our donors, the Canadian Cancer Society is leading the way in the fight against cancer. The Canadian Cancer Society:

- funds excellent research for all types of cancer
- advocates for healthy public policy
- promotes healthy lifestyles to help reduce cancer risk
- provides information about cancer
- supports people living with cancer

Contact us for up-to-date information about cancer, our services, or to make a donation.



Canadian Cancer Society    Société canadienne du cancer

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