

# What is second-hand smoke and what are its effects on my health?

Second-hand smoke is also known as Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS). Second-hand smoke includes both exhaled mainstream smoke from smokers and sidestream smoke from the end of a cigarette, cigar, or pipe. Second-hand smoke contains more than 4,000 substances, including over 50 that are linked to cancer (NCI Monographs). Many of the compounds in tobacco smoke are released at higher rates in sidestream smoke than in mainstream smoke. (Air Purifiers & Cleaners, 2001).

More details regarding the composition of second-hand smoke can be found on the Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada website: <http://www.smoke-free.ca/Health/Healtheffectssmoke.htm> and <http://www.smoke-free.ca/factsheets/Chemicals.htm>

## What are the health effects of ETS? (National Clearinghouse on Tobacco and Health)

### **Cardiovascular and Cerebrovascular Disease**

Increased exposure means an increased risk of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease. It is estimated that non-smoking spouses living with a smoker face a 20-30% increase in the risk of death from ischemic heart disease or heart attack (S. Glantz and W. Parmley, Passive Smoking and Heart Disease; Clinical Progress Series).

### **Cancer**

- Lung Cancer (second-hand smoke is the third largest known cause of lung cancer deaths)
- Bladder cancer (linked to beta-naphthylamine)
- Pancreatic cancer (linked to tobacco specific N-nitrosamines)
- Cervical cancer (high levels of exposure are estimated to result in a two to three fold risk)

- Breast cancer (Cancer Causes and Control 11:211-221 (2000)). However, these findings still remain controversial.

### **Respiratory Disease and Related Disorders**

Acute and chronic conditions:

- coughing
- wheezing
- excessive sputum production
- pneumonia
- bronchitis
- bronchiolitis
- middle ear infections
- reduced lung function
- increased asthma
- colds
- sore throats

## Links to other websites on the health effects of second-hand smoke:

*Canadian Health Network:*

<http://www.canadian-health-network.ca/faq-faq/tobacco-tabagisme/8e.html>

*OMA position paper on second-hand smoke:*

<http://www.oma.org/phealth/2ndsmoke.htm>

*The facts about second-hand smoke:*

<http://www.davehitt.com/facts/>

*James Repace:*

<http://repace.com/factsheet.html>

*The Lung Association:*

<http://www.on.lung.ca/nosmoking/secondhand.html>

*Health Canada:* [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hecs-sesc/tobacco/facts/health\\_facts/second\\_hand.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hecs-sesc/tobacco/facts/health_facts/second_hand.html)

*Ontario Tobacco Research Unit:*

[http://www.camh.net/otru/pdf/special\\_ets\\_eng.PDF](http://www.camh.net/otru/pdf/special_ets_eng.PDF)

