

SECONDHAND SMOKE & TOBACCO USE



What is secondhand smoke?

Secondhand smoke is the smoke that comes from a person's cigarette, pipe, cigar, or other lighted tobacco product.

When you smoke around other people - in the home, at work, or in the car - you expose them to secondhand smoke. Smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, at least 70 of which are known to cause cancer.

Does secondhand smoke cause health problems?

Secondhand smoke causes death and a number of serious health problems. Each year it kills more than 41,000 people in the United States.

People exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk for:

- Coronary heart disease
- Lung cancer
- Stroke
- Asthma attacks
- Worsened lung function, bronchitis, pneumonia, and ear infections (in children)
- Low infant birth weight and sudden infant death

Secondhand smoke not only harms humans, but pets as well. They can experience secondhand smoke-related cancer and heart problems just like humans.

How will the health of those around me benefit if I quit smoking?

When you quit smoking your health will immediately begin to improve as will the health of people exposed to your secondhand smoke. So quitting is a win for you and a win for them. When a person is no longer exposed to secondhand smoke they are likely to experience:

- Improved lung function
- Reduced heart attack risk
- Reduced respiratory disease risk
- Fewer respiratory disease symptoms

I want to quit using tobacco — how do I get started?

- Talk to your VA health care provider about cessation medications and counseling to treat your tobacco use.
- Call VA's tobacco quitline at **1-855-QUIT-VET** (1-855-784-8838) Monday–Friday. Available in English & Spanish.
- Sign up for VA's SmokefreeVET text messaging program — text the word **VET** to **47848** (manda **VETesp** al **47848** para ayuda en español) or visit smokefree.gov/VET.

