

Thirdhand Smoke: A Threat to Child Health

Thirdhand smoke is a danger to children. People with breathing problems, pregnant women, the elderly, and animals are also vulnerable to thirdhand smoke. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that all children be protected from tobacco smoke. This fact sheet offers information and suggestions to prevent exposure to thirdhand smoke.

What is Thirdhand Smoke?

- The left-over pollution after a cigarette is put out
- The smoke residue can stick to dust, furniture, carpeting, car seats, hair, or clothes
- Secondhand smoke particles are released into the air, combine with particles normally in the atmosphere (i.e., nitrous acid or ozone) and forms a new compound called nitrosamines, which are released into the air as cancer-causing chemicals

Facts about Thirdhand Smoke

- 43% of smokers (65% of nonsmokers) believe thirdhand smoke can hurt children
- There is **no** safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke
- Thirdhand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals
- Homes and cars where people have smoked can smell of cigarettes for a long time
- Decontaminating a home or car that was used by a smoker may require expensive professional cleaning as it can stain walls, floors, and the smell can remain in dry wall, insulation, and other building materials
- Smoking in different rooms using fans, or smoking in front of an open window does not prevent thirdhand smoke
- Babies and children can be harmed because they breathe in toxic chemicals when they crawl on floors, sit in cars, or are held by adults- thirdhand smoke can settle on all of these surfaces
- Pets are also at risk because the chemicals from smoke stay in their fur or feathers

How to Protect against Thirdhand Smoke

- Do not allow smoking inside your home or car
- Do not allow smoking near you, your children, or your pets
- Ask anyone who cares for your child or pet to follow these rules- and tell them why
- E-cigarette aerosol also contains chemicals. Do not let anyone use e-cigarettes in your home, car, or near your child or pet
- The only way to completely protect against thirdhand smoke is to quit. The AAP recommends talking to your child's pediatrician about ways to keep your child healthy