



CLEARING THE AIR

In Ireland today, seven out of ten adults do not smoke yet all of us can be exposed to second-hand smoke. However, action is being taken to clear the air of tobacco smoke and help create a healthier and safer environment for everyone.



Enclosed workplaces are smoke-free by law. This includes licensed premises, restaurants, public transport and registered clubs in so far as they are workplaces.

Anyone prosecuted for smoking in a “no-smoking” area is liable to a fine. The person in charge of “no-smoking” areas must ensure that the restrictions are complied with and they are also liable to prosecution if they do not comply with the law.

There are certain exemptions to the public health law but even in these workplaces employers are obliged to provide a safe and healthy working environment. This includes protecting employees from exposure to second-hand smoke.

Smoke-free laws exist to protect us from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. You should draw any breaches of the “smoke-free workplaces” legislation to the attention of the management of the facility or service concerned. If the response is not satisfactory, notify the environmental health section of your local health board, or the Office of Tobacco Control.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

IF YOU ARE A NON-SMOKER let others know that you do care if they smoke around you. Make your home and car smoke-free zones.

Remember that smoking is an addiction and many smokers find it difficult to abstain. Be polite but firm. Their smoking also affects you.

IF YOU ARE A SMOKER please respect restrictions on smoking. They have been introduced for the safety and health of those around you. Avoid smoking in situations where it may cause harm to others, especially children.

For support and information on smoking cessation call **National Smokers' Quitline 1850 201 203**, Irish Cancer Society, Irish Heart Foundation or health promotion section of your health board.

Contact the environmental health service of your health board or the Office of Tobacco Control for guidance on smoke-free workplace laws.

If you would like further information contact the Office of Tobacco Control.



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Second-hand Smoke: the facts



For more information visit www.otc.ie



WHAT IS SECOND HAND SMOKE?

Second-hand smoke is the smoke a smoker blows into the air, and the smoke that drifts into the air from the burning end of a cigarette, cigar or pipe.

Exposure to second-hand smoke frequently referred to as “passive smoking” occurs when you are exposed to other people’s tobacco smoke.

Most of the smoke from a cigarette goes directly into the air. This is called side stream smoke. Second-hand smoke is the mix of the 15% mainstream smoke exhaled by the smoker and the 85% side stream smoke.

WHY IS IT DANGEROUS?

Second-hand smoke known technically as environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) is a mixture of over 4,000 chemicals. Many of these harm our health; 200 are poisons and 50 including arsenic, benzene and formaldehyde are already known to cause cancer.

**FACT:
THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF EXPOSURE TO SECOND-HAND SMOKE**

It is not only the visible smoke that poses a problem but also the invisible gases, which we may not even realise we are breathing in.

SECOND-HAND SMOKE IS A SERIOUS HEALTH RISK

Smoking not only endangers the health of smokers but also the health of those around them.

Second-hand smoke causes serious and fatal diseases. These include:

- lung cancer
- heart disease
- respiratory problems in adults and children

It also aggravates illnesses such as asthma and chronic bronchitis.

People suffering from respiratory disorders and heart disease are at particular risk.

**FACT:
SECOND-HAND SMOKE INCREASES THE RISK OF CORONARY HEART DISEASE AMONG NON-SMOKERS BY 25-35%.**

Other ill effects include:

- sore eyes, nose and throat
- coughs and sneezes
- bronchitis, pneumonia and other respiratory problems
- headaches, dizziness and nausea

Non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke suffer many of the diseases of active smoking. Although the risks are lower than for active smokers, there is no safe level of exposure to the cancer causing chemicals in tobacco smoke.

CHILDREN AT RISK

Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of second-hand smoke as their bodies’ defence mechanisms are less developed. They are also less able to avoid or object to it.

Their health may be endangered even before birth. Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of miscarriage and stillbirth. Smoking in the presence of a pregnant woman may also endanger the health of the foetus.

Exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of cot death (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

Breathing second-hand smoke can cause young children serious illness and may make them more likely to suffer health problems in later life. They are more likely to suffer from bronchitis, pneumonia and lung diseases. Children who breathe second-hand smoke have more ear infections and it is a cause of chronic middle-ear disease (glue ear), the most common cause of deafness in children.

**FACT:
THE MOST COMMON CAUSE OF DEAFNESS IN CHILDREN IS ASSOCIATED WITH PASSIVE SMOKING**

Children who breathe second-hand smoke are more likely to develop asthma while those with asthma suffer more severe and more frequent attacks if regularly exposed to second-hand smoke.