



Growing up smoke-free...

How you can help your child
to grow up smoke-free



Workers are protected from the effects of second-hand smoke in the workplace but...

What about children in the home?
This leaflet can help you protect your child from the harmful effects of cigarette smoking.



What's in a cigarette?

Cigarettes contain over **7,000 chemicals**.

Hundreds of these are hazardous and at least 69 are known to cause cancer.

Some of the chemicals found in cigarette smoke are also found in household cleaner, weed killer, lighter fuel, ant poison and car exhaust fumes.

You can see below that cigarettes contain a lot of harmful chemicals. Things like arsenic used in rat poison, carbon monoxide released in car exhaust fumes and lead which used to be found in household batteries.

Cigarettes contain up to 4,000 chemicals. Amounts in each cigarette are small but, over time, this cocktail of chemicals builds up to damage your lungs, heart, brain – in fact, just about every part of your body.

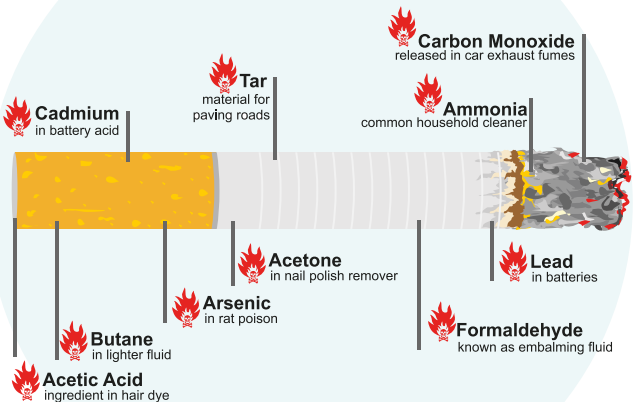


Figure 1: What's in a cigarette

What is second-hand smoke?

Second-hand smoke is a combination of:

- **Mainstream smoke** – the smoke that a smoker breathes in and then breathes out
- **Sidestream smoke** – the smoke that comes from the burning end of the cigarette

Breathing in other people's cigarette smoke is known as second-hand smoking.

There is no safe level of second-hand smoke. It is considered a Class A Carcinogen (this means it causes cancer), and it is in the same category as dangerous substances such as radon and asbestos.



Second-hand smoking causes more than one million deaths around the world every year.



65,000 of these preventable deaths are in children under 15.

What is all the fuss about?

Breathing in second-hand smoke, even for a short time, can cause eye irritation, headaches, coughs, sore throat, dizziness, nausea and heart effects for non-smokers.

Breathing in second-hand smoke over a long time, such as when you live with a smoker, can cause or worsen asthma in both adults and children.

Second-hand smoke increases the risk of lung, breast, cervical and other cancers, heart disease, stroke, breathing difficulties and dementia in adults.

Children who live in a smoky home are at greater risk of the following:

- Coughing and wheezing
- Chest infection (such as pneumonia and bronchitis)
- Severe asthma
- Middle ear infections and glue ear (these can cause partial deafness)
- Cot death
- Increased risk of bacterial meningitis (inflammation of the brain)
- Increased risk of some types of childhood cancer

Once the child stops breathing in second-hand smoke, the risk of these problems is greatly reduced.

If you smoke while pregnant, your baby has an increased risk of:

- **Low birth weight:** Smoking reduces the amount of oxygen and nutrients that get to your baby. Your baby needs these to grow and develop.
Babies born to women who smoke have a greater risk of birth defects and other health problems.
- **Cot death:** If you smoke during pregnancy or after your baby is born, your baby is up to three times more likely to die from cot death than the baby of a mother who doesn't smoke.
- **Asthma, wheezing and chest infections:** Smoking while pregnant damages the development of your baby's lungs. Babies born to women who smoke are twice as likely to develop asthma. They are also more likely to have problems with wheezing and chest infections.



Why are children who live with smokers more at risk?

- Children are more at risk because their immune systems, which protect them from getting sick, are not fully developed.
- Young children find it hard to avoid or complain about second-hand smoke.
- Children's lungs are smaller so they breathe faster. Children breathe in 50% more air than adults.

Children depend on adults to make sure their air and environment are smoke-free.



How can I protect my children from second-hand smoke?

Quitting smoking is one of the most important things you can do to protect the health of your children.

Your children are twice as likely to smoke when they become adults if you smoke. Quitting smoking is the most important thing you can do for your own health, but if you are not ready to quit, you can still protect your children from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. Here are some tips:

Do

- ✓ **Make your home completely smoke-free**

Smoking only in certain rooms, using a fan or smoking out of a window is **not** enough to protect your children's health.

Pollution from second-hand smoke can move from room to room when doors are opened and can linger on carpets, furniture, walls and clothes long after

it has gone from the air. Over time, it can be released back into the air. Small children are especially at risk from this smoke because they spend so much time crawling or playing on the floor. The only way to protect them from this 'third-hand smoke' is to make your home smoke-free.

✓ **Smoke outdoors**

Smoke outdoors and away from your children if you want to smoke.

Ask others to smoke outside – not inside – your home

✓ **Ask family members or visitors who smoke to smoke outdoors** and not to smoke around your children.

Ask anyone who **minds your children** (especially child minders) to keep their home smoke-free and not to smoke around your children.



Don't

- ✘ **Don't smoke around your children**

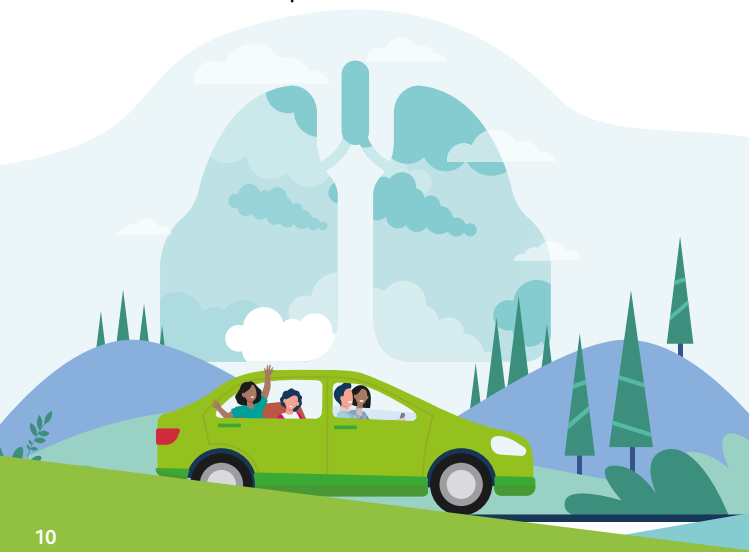
To protect your children's health, try to quit smoking with the support of HSE QUIT services and don't smoke around your children.

- ✘ **Don't vape**

We don't know enough yet about the possible risks associated with vaping. The best way to protect your children's health is to keep the air they breathe clean.

- ✘ **Don't smoke in your car**

Levels of second-hand smoke in cars can be very high due to the small space. Even smoking in your car when your children are not with you will create third-hand smoke which may affect them next time they get into the car. Since 2016 it has been an offence to smoke in a car when children are present.



We are here to help

We hope you found this leaflet useful. We know it can be difficult to quit smoking but we also know you can do it!

If you use our behavioural support as well as stop smoking medication and manage to quit for 28 days you are five times more likely to quit for good.



Help and advice

You can QUIT and we can help!

You're twice as likely to quit for good with our help.

Contact the HSE QUIT Team

Freephone: 1800 201 203

Tweet: @HSEQuitTeam

Facebook: www.facebook.com/HSEQuit

Web: www.quit.ie

Freetext: text QUIT to 50100

Face-to-face clinics

We offer quit-smoking clinics and groups in many areas. You can find contact details on www.quit.ie/clinics or contact the QUIT team on Freephone 1800 201 203.

Health professionals

Your family doctor (GP), midwife, practice nurse, public health nurse or pharmacist can all offer advice and support when you are quitting smoking.

