

# 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 and people are around you like in the home; at work; in a car; you expose them to secondhand smoke. Smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals and a number of them 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
- Strokes
- Asthma attacks and ear infections (in children)
- 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?

- 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** (or **VETesp** to **47848** for Spanish) or visit [smokefree.gov/VET](https://smokefree.gov/VET)
- Talk to your VA primary care provider about tobacco cessation medications and counseling that can help you quit
- Visit [publichealth.va.gov/smoking](https://publichealth.va.gov/smoking)



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