



NATIONAL NON-SMOKING WEEK
SEMAINE NATIONALE SANS FUMÉE

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Brought to you by the Canadian Council for Tobacco Control
Présenté par le Conseil canadien pour le contrôle du tabac

Fact Sheet on Smoke-Free Homes

January 2009

Secondhand smoke in the home is a major health problem for Canadians, especially families with children.

Here are some Canadian statistics you may not know:

In Canada, 14% of homes have at least one person who regularly smokes.ⁱ

Even in homes where regular smoking does not take place, 12% still allow smoking inside.ⁱⁱ

Smoking is the number one cause of residential fires and fire-related losses in Canada each year.ⁱⁱⁱ

Canadians are concerned about exposing their children to secondhand smoke.^{iv}

However, 7.3% of children under 11 years old and 13% of children between 12 and 17 years old are still exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes.^v

What are the health effects of smoking in the home on children and pets?

Children suffer more than adults from the toxic effects of secondhand smoke because their lungs are still growing and developing and because it is more difficult for them to get away from the smoke.^{vi}

The home is the greatest source of exposure to secondhand smoke for children.^{vii}

Children who live in homes where someone smokes can experience a number of serious health problems including breathing problems, asthma,^{viii} ear infections^{ix} and even sudden infant death syndrome.^x

Repeated exposure to secondhand smoke can make a child miss school more often^{xi} and can also lead to poor (academic) performance in school.^{xii}

Secondhand smoke can cause leukemia (a type of cancer) in cats,^{xiii} and dogs in smoking households have a greater risk of cancer.^{xiv} Secondhand smoke also creates asthma and breathing problems in pets.^{xv}

Drifting secondhand smoke is a problem in apartments and multi-unit dwellings:

Did you know that secondhand smoke from neighbours can drift through openings designed for electrical wiring, plumbing and ductwork for heating and air conditioning?^{xvi}

A Health Canada survey of people living in multi-unit dwellings found that 36% of people who live in multi-unit dwellings experience smoke seeping or drifting into their personal living space usually through an open window or door from a neighbour's patio, balcony or outdoor common area.^{xvii}



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Think about it!

The best way to ensure that your children are not exposed to secondhand smoke is to ask smokers to smoke outside with the doors and windows closed.^{xviii} Remember, children should not be left alone if you are smoking outside.

Be fire safe!

When you smoke outside, use a sturdy ashtray or a can filled with sand or water to collect ashes. NEVER toss hot cigarette butts or ashes in the trash or in the bushes. NEVER put butts out in the soil of potted plants. Plant soil contains peat moss and other fertilizers that can easily burn and there have been many fires as a result of planters catching fire.

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ⁱⁱⁱ Health Canada Website. Science and Research: Program Estimates the Damage of Cigarette Fires. 2007. Accessed November 12, 2008 from: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/sr-sr/activ/protection/fire-feu-eng.php>

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^v Health Canada Website, Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey Supplementary Tables. Table 9. *Exposure of Children at home to Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) by province and age group, Canada 2007*. Accessed November 3, 2008 from http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/tobac-tabac/research-recherche/stat/_ctums-esutc_2007/ann-table9-eng.php

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