



Not Ready to Quit? Eliminate Indoor Tobacco Smoke Until You Quit

Struggling with a nicotine addiction is tough. If you are not ready to quit, you can help children stay healthy by eliminating exposure to tobacco smoke by establishing a smoke-free home and vehicle. By doing this now, it will also help you avoid two major triggers when you are ready to quit.

Establishing a completely smoke-free home is the most effective way to protect children and pets from exposure to tobacco smoke. Opening a window or limiting smoking to a certain room are not effective measures, as the tobacco smoke is still circulated throughout the air in the home. Making vehicles smoke-free is also important because tobacco smoke in vehicles can reach high concentration levels.

Tobacco smoke is made up of very small particles that lodge deep into the lung tissue and artery walls triggering asthma and other serious respiratory conditions as well as contributing to heart disease. The particles are less than one-seventh of the width of a human hair. Also, smoke eaters and ventilation systems can't remove the cancer causing agents from the air, even if the air smells better.

According to the Surgeon General's 2007 report "*The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Secondhand Smoke*" children age 3-11 years have cotinine levels (a biological marker for tobacco smoke exposure) more than twice as high as adults. So when you smoke — anywhere — toxic particulate matter from tobacco smoke gets into your hair and clothing.

Infants are more susceptible to these toxic particulates because they are smaller and have a faster breathing rate, which means they are exposed to higher concentrations than older children. Until you can quit smoking do the following: smoke away from children at all times, wear a jacket outside that is only used when smoking, and wash your hands when you come inside after smoking so the children, especially infants, are not exposed to the toxins.

Tobacco smoke hurts your pets as well. Secondhand smoke has been associated with oral cancer and lymphoma in cats, and lung and nasal cancer in dogs, as well as lung cancer in birds. Your cats are susceptible because the cancer causing carcinogens accumulate on their fur and when they groom themselves the mucus membrane in their mouth absorbs the deadly cancer causing agents into their body. A study conducted at Colorado State University shows that there is a higher incidence of nasal tumors in dogs that are exposed to secondhand smoke in their home, specifically in the long nosed breed of dogs; shorter or medium nosed dogs showed a higher rate of lung cancer.

When you are ready, make the call, ask for help, until then cut down, remove triggers by not smoking in your house or your car and remove the tobacco smoke for the health of everyone.

Sincerely,

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