



## Second Hand Smoke

### **ACTION STEPS**

**Do not smoke in your home or car or permit others to do so. If a family member insists on smoking indoors, increase ventilation in the area where smoking takes place. Open windows or use exhaust fans. Do not smoke if children are present, especially infants and toddlers. They are particularly susceptible to the effects of passive smoking.**

**Contact your local extension office, your state department of health, or the national indoor air quality information clearinghouse at 1-800-438-4318 or the number listed below.**



**Modoc Tribe Office Of  
Environmental Quality  
202 D Street Northeast  
Miami, Ok. 74354  
918-542-8176**

**Resource USDA office of  
healthy homes. EPA IAQ**

### What is second hand smoke?

Secondhand smoke is also known as environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) or passive smoke. It is a mixture of 2 forms of smoke that come from burning tobacco: side stream smoke (smoke that comes from the end of a lighted cigarette, pipe, or cigar) and mainstream smoke (smoke that is exhaled by a smoker). Even though we think of these as the same, they aren't. The side stream smoke has higher concentrations of cancer-causing agents (carcinogens) than the mainstream smoke. And, it contains smaller particles than mainstream smoke, which make their way into the body's cells more easily.

When non-smokers are exposed to secondhand smoke it is called *involuntary smoking* or *passive smoking*. Non-smokers who breathe in secondhand smoke take in nicotine and other toxic chemicals just like smokers do. The more secondhand smoke you are exposed to, the higher the level of these harmful chemicals in your body.

### Should you be concerned?

Secondhand smoke contains hundreds of chemicals known to be toxic (poisonous) or carcinogenic (cancer-causing). Although secondhand smoke itself vanishes from sight after a brief period of time, it actually lingers in the air hours after the tobacco has been extinguished. Further, the chemicals in secondhand smoke are absorbed into clothing fabric, drapes, furniture upholstery, and carpeting — leaving dangerous chemicals in the environment long after the smoke vanishes from sight.

### What about risks to children?

Second hand smoke is a serious health risk, particularly to children. EPA estimates that second hand smoke is responsible for between 150,000 and 300,000 lower respiratory tract infections in infants and children under 18 months of age. Children exposed to second hand smoke are also more likely to have reduced lung function and symptoms of respiratory irritation like cough, excess phlegm and wheeze.

In addition, EPA found that an estimated 700,000 to 1.6 million physician office visits per year for children under 3 years of age with middle ear infections can be attributed to exposure of second hand smoke.