**Just the Facts:**
**Secondhand Smoke**

- Secondhand smoke is also called environmental tobacco smoke (ETS); exposure to secondhand smoke can be called involuntary smoking or passive smoking. (1)

- Secondhand smoke is a mixture of the smoke given off by the burning end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar, and the smoke exhaled from the lungs of smokers. (1)

- Nicotine is not the only toxin nonsmokers are exposed to in secondhand smoke. Smoke from the burning end of a cigarette contains over 4,000 chemicals and 40 carcinogens including: formaldehyde, cyanide, arsenic, carbon monoxide, methane and benzene. (2)

- Smoke-filled rooms can have up to six times the air pollution as a busy highway. (3)

- The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) study of environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) states: ETS is a known human carcinogen that poses a serious public health threat and is a primary factor in the development of lower respiratory infections in children. (4)

**Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke**

- Secondhand smoke is the third leading cause of preventable death in this country. (5)

- Secondhand smoke kills 53,000 nonsmokers in the U.S. each year. (5)

- One nonsmoker dies of secondhand smoke for every eight smokers. (5)

- Persons exposed to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) or secondhand smoke have a 20 to 30 percent greater risk of lung cancer than nonsmokers who have never been exposed to ETS. (6)

- Secondhand smoke causes heart disease, aggravates asthmatic conditions, and impairs blood circulation. (7)

- Children of smokers have a greater chance of developing colds, asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia, chronic coughs, ear infections, chronic eye irritation and reduced lung function. (8)

- Secondhand smoke can lead to a buildup of fluid in the middle ear in children, the most common cause of hospitalization of children for an operation. (8)

- On average, ETS triggers 23 asthma attacks every hour in children and causes 20 infants to be hospitalized for lower respiratory tract infections everyday. (9)

- Nonsmokers exposed to 20 or more cigarettes a day at home had twice the risk of developing lung cancer. (10)

- The separation of smokers and nonsmokers within the same air space may reduce, but does not eliminate, the exposure of nonsmokers to environmental tobacco smoke. (11)
Secondhand Smoke Fact Sources:


Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line

888-842-QUIT

Help Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week