

# Staying Away From Secondhand Smoke

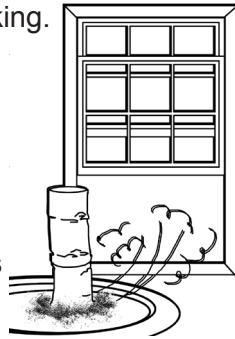
You are your child's best defense against the risks of secondhand smoke from tobacco products used around him or her. Today your child learned that secondhand smoke can increase:

- coughing and wheezing
- eye and ear problems and irritations
- respiratory and ear infections for children
- symptoms of asthma and allergies
- chances of getting lung cancer

It can also increase the likelihood of getting bronchitis or pneumonia. In addition, children exposed to secondhand smoke may score lower on achievement and IQ tests.

To reduce or avoid exposure to secondhand smoke, your child learned these ideas to try when he or she is near someone who is smoking.

- Move away from him or her.
- Open a window.
- Go to another room.
- Go outside.
- Ask to sit in a "non-smoking" section when your family goes out to eat.
- Keep the door to your bedroom shut if someone smokes in your home.
- Ask the person not to smoke. Speak with respect.



Support your child in trying these ideas to protect his or her lungs from smoke. Practice with him or her some respectful ways to ask other people to stop smoking. Here is one way suggested in class:

*"Excuse me,  
the smoke from your cigarette is  
making it hard for me to breathe.  
Would you please not smoke while  
I'm near you?"*

**As a parent or guardian, you can take steps to protect yourself and your child from secondhand smoke. Consider these tips.**

## Inside Your Home

If you live with someone who smokes, ask him or her not to smoke inside the house. Ask guests to do the same. If this is not an option, set aside a designated smoking room. Open the windows often, and keep rooms well ventilated. If possible, invest in exhaust fans or air filters.

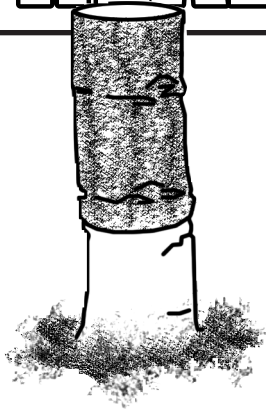
## Outside Your Home

Always eat at smokefree restaurants or ask to be seated in non-smoking areas of restaurants. Determine the smoking policies at your child's day care, place of worship, and other places where your child spends time. Ask friends and relatives to not smoke around your child. If people are smoking, have your child play outside or leave the room.

It may feel uncomfortable to ask people to refrain from smoking. But remember, your child's health is worth it. And if you smoke, do your best to avoid exposing your child to secondhand smoke.

Always support people who are trying to quit smoking! If you're willing to quit, you can find resources that will help you. Check out the websites and phone number listed on the next page. Quitting is one of the best things you can do for your health and for your child's.

# READY TO QUIT?



## Helpful Ideas If You Want to Quit Smoking

- American Cancer Society, “Guide to Quitting Smoking”:  
[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)
- American Legacy Foundation, “Become an Ex”:  
[www.becomeanex.org](http://www.becomeanex.org)
- American Lung Association, “Freedom From Smoking”:  
[www.ffsonline.org](http://www.ffsonline.org)
- Centers for Disease Prevention and Control:  
[www.cdc.gov/tobacco/how2quit.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/how2quit.htm)
- Michigan Department of Community Health:  
[www.Michigan.gov/mdch](http://www.Michigan.gov/mdch) or phone Michigan QuitLine at  
1-800-480-7848
- Michigan Surgeon General, Local Cessation Programs in Michigan:  
[www.michigan.gov/surgeongeneral](http://www.michigan.gov/surgeongeneral)
- Michigan Surgeon General, Free Quit Kits: 1-800-537-5666 or  
[www.michigan.gov/surgeongeneral](http://www.michigan.gov/surgeongeneral)
- Contact your family doctor or local health department

To get more information and make a “Smoke-Free Home Pledge,” visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website:  
[www.epa.gov/smokefree](http://www.epa.gov/smokefree).

## More Resources!

Visit the “Family Corner” on the Educational Materials Center website at [www.emc.cmich.edu/family](http://www.emc.cmich.edu/family). You will find a checklist you can use to see how well your child can avoid secondhand smoke. There are other resources, too. Research children’s books or a health topic of interest to you. Take a look!

