

# Avoiding Exposure to **Secondhand Smoke**



There are many reasons for people to avoid or reduce their exposure to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke is smoke that is exhaled or comes from a lighted cigarette, pipe or cigar. Exposure to secondhand smoke can increase:

- coughing and wheezing.
- breathing problems.
- asthma symptoms.
- the likelihood of getting bronchitis (inflammation of the membrane in the airway) or pneumonia or make it difficult for someone to recover from these illnesses.
- eye and ear problems and irritations.
- the chances for getting lung cancer.
- the chances of lower scores on achievement and IQ tests.

Your child has been learning the reasons to avoid or reduce his or her exposure to secondhand smoke and ways to do it. The next time he or she is in a smoky area you may see or hear one of these things:

- Ask family and friends not to smoke in the house or car.
- Go outside.
- Move to a different room.
- Close the door to the room, separating you from the smoker.
- Move away from the smoker.
- Respectfully ask the smoker to put out the cigarette or find another place to smoke.



Respectfully asking a smoker to put out a cigarette or find another place to smoke can be difficult to do even as an adult. Your son or daughter has practiced ways to tell someone what bothers him or her and what he or she would like to happen. For example, your child might make these requests:

- “The smoke is bothering me. Could you please put out your cigarette?”
- “Smoking bothers my eyes. Could you go somewhere else to smoke your cigarette?”
- “I have asthma. Could you please not smoke near me?”
- “Smoke makes me feel sick. Can you please smoke somewhere else?”

Visit this website for more information on the effects of tobacco use on children: [www.tobaccofreekids.org](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org).

## **We hope you will consider supporting your child’s request to breathe clean air!**

If you smoke, try to avoid exposing others to the smoke from your cigarette, pipe, or cigar. If you’d like to quit smoking, visit these web sites for helpful ideas.

- 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.

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