



Growing up in smoke

Protect your children from passive smoke

Children are passive smokers

Every day, thousands of young children have no choice but to breathe in second hand smoke

- at home
- in the home of a child minder
- in the family car

While most adults can claim their right to breathe in clean air, this is not true for children. They have to depend on us as adults to make sure their air is smoke-free.

Second-hand smoke

Only 15% of smoke from a cigarette is inhaled by the smoker. The other 85% goes directly into the air and is known as "second-hand smoke".

Second-hand smoke is a combination of

- mainstream smoke, which is the smoke inhaled and then breathed out.
- sidestream smoke, which is the smoke coming from the cigarettes between puffs.

Second-hand smoke is dangerous

Sidestream smoke has more tar, nicotine, carbon monoxide and other chemicals that cause cancer than the smoke inhaled through the cigarette itself.

All second-hand smoke contains cancer-causing chemicals.

Passive smoking

Passive smoking is the breathing in of the second-hand smoke produced by other people's cigarettes.

The Law and Passive smoking

Smoking is banned completely in schools, pre-schools, crèches, day nurseries and playgroups. It is also banned on school buses.

If you come across a situation where this ban is not being enforced, you have the right to expect the person in charge to put right that situation. If you need advice on how to do this, get in touch with your local Health Board.

Passive smoking hurts children

Young children who are developing and growing are especially sensitive to second hand smoke. We know that children of parents who smoke:

- Have more frequent and more severe asthma attacks.
- Are much more likely to suffer from serious chest infections such as bronchitis or pneumonia.
- Get more ear infections and have cases of "glue ear", the main cause of deafness in young children.
- Have lungs which do not function as well as the lungs of children not exposed to passive smoking.
- Are more likely to be absent from school due to ill health and are less likely to do well at sport.

The risk of cot death in a baby born to a mother who smokes is greatly increased. This risk increases with the number of cigarettes smoked per day.

You can protect your children

There are lots of things you can do to protect your children from second-hand smoke:

- Make your home smoke-free for your family and visitors
- If this is not possible, confine smoking to a room not used much by the children
- If someone minds your children in their home, you can ask them to keep it smoke-free
- Avoid smoking in the car
- Make sure that the smoking regulations are being kept in your children's crèche, playgroup or school.

Just opening a window in a room or in the car is not enough to protect your child from the damaging effects of second-hand smoke. The dangerous particles are likely to remain hanging in the air.

If you are a smoker

The best protection that you can give your children is to quit. By quitting, you also increase your child's chances of growing up as a non-smoker.

Quitting is not easy, yet thousands of people succeed in doing it every year.

If you want information and support:

Consult your G.P
Contact any of the following
The Health Promotion Department of your local Health Board
The Irish Heart Foundation