

Secondhand Smoke and Lung Cancer: What You Need to Know



There are many dangers of secondhand smoke:

- Secondhand smoke causes heart and lung disease, including lung cancer, the leading cancer killer in America.
- Breathing secondhand smoke is a known cause of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Children who breathe secondhand smoke are also more likely to have lung problems, ear infections and worsened asthma from being around smoke.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke can make existing health conditions such as heart disease and asthma worse.

More on secondhand smoke and lung cancer:

- Secondhand smoke is a risk factor for lung cancer. Approximately 7,330¹ cases of lung cancer are caused by secondhand smoke each year.
- Data show that patients with non-small cell lung cancer (the most common type of lung cancer) who are exposed to secondhand smoke have worse outcomes,² including:
 - Reduced overall survival.
 - Reduced progression-free survival (the length of time during and after treatment when the cancer does not grow or spread).
 - Simply put: lung cancer patients exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to die than patients not exposed.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke makes it harder for lung cancer patients who smoke to quit smoking.³ Smoking during lung cancer treatment makes the treatment less effective.^{4,5}

What is still unknown?

- More research is needed to understand the “dose response” relationship, or exactly how much cancer outcomes are worsened by different amounts of secondhand smoke.

What can you do?

- Insist that people don’t smoke in your home or car.
- Avoid group settings where people are smoking.
- Remind the people around you that they can help you through cancer treatment by not smoking around you.
- Join our fight for smokefree air and lung health by becoming a member of our [Lung Action Network at Lung.org/action](https://www.lung.org/action).
- Tell your story about how secondhand smoke has impacted you at [LUNGFORCE.org/tell-your-story](https://www.lungforce.org/tell-your-story).

Resources

- If you or a loved one is ready to quit smoking, call our free Lung HelpLine at 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) or visit [FreedomFromSmoking.org](https://www.freedomfromsmoking.org).
- Learn more about lung cancer at [Lung.org/lung-cancer](https://www.lung.org/lung-cancer).

¹U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. 2014.

²Zhou W, Heist RS, Liu G, et al. Secondhand smoke exposure and survival in early-stage non-small cell lung cancer patients. *Clin Cancer Res* 2006;12:7187–93.

³Eng, et al. Second-Hand Smoke As a Predictor of Smoking Cessation Among Lung Cancer Survivors. 2014, doi: 10.1200/JCO.2013.50.9695

⁴Gemine R and Lewis K. Smoking Cessation with Lung Cancer: Not Too Little, Never Too Late! *EMJ Respir*. 2016;4[1]:86-91.

⁵Parsons A, et al. Influence of smoking cessation after diagnosis of early stage lung cancer on prognosis: systematic review of observational studies with meta-analysis. *BMJ* 2010;340:b5569. doi:10.1136/bmj.b5569