

Passive smoking

Smokers not only put themselves at risk of serious health problems, they also put the people around them at risk of toxic chemicals in tobacco smoke.

What is passive smoking?

The process of smoking produces three different types of tobacco smoke:

1. *Mainstream smoke*—smoke directly inhaled by the smoker through a burning cigarette.
2. *Exhaled mainstream smoke*—smoke breathed out by the smoker.
3. *Sidestream smoke*—smoke which drifts from the burning end of a cigarette.

Passive smoking—sometimes referred to as second-hand smoke—is the inhalation of exhaled mainstream smoke and sidestream smoke.

What are the health effects of passive smoking?

There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke.

Tobacco smoke contains more than 7000 chemicals—at least 70 of which are known to cause cancer. Non-smokers with long term exposure to tobacco smoke have up to a 20–30 per cent higher risk of developing lung cancer when compared with non-smokers who have not been exposed.

Passive smoking may also cause:

- breast cancer
- nasal sinus cancer
- stroke
- onset of asthma and worsening of asthma
- respiratory symptoms, such as coughing and wheezing

The more time non-smokers spend exposed to tobacco smoke, the worse the risk to their overall health.

What about passive smoking and babies?

Young children are very susceptible to the health effects of tobacco smoke because they have smaller and more delicate lungs than adults, and their immune systems are still developing.

Babies and children exposed to tobacco smoke are risk of:

- sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- bronchitis, pneumonia and other lung or airway infections
- asthma and respiratory symptoms, such as coughing and wheezing
- middle ear disease (glue ear)

Having cigarettes around the home also exposes children to danger. A baby or child who eats a cigarette, or even just a cigarette butt, can become very sick.

Make your home smoke-free

Consider making your home smoke-free—this means that people who live in the home, or visitors to the home, can only smoke outside, away from doors and windows.

Parents are role models for their children, so setting an example by not smoking can reduce the chances of your children taking up smoking.

Children with parents who smoke record nicotine levels the same as if they were actually smoking up to 150 cigarettes per year and breathe in many of the same cancer-causing chemicals.

There is strong community support for smoke-free public places

Under Queensland's tobacco laws, the following places are smoke-free:

- inside public venues, such as workplaces, offices, hotels, clubs and restaurants
- within 10 metres of children's playground equipment
- within four metres of non-residential building entrances
- between the flags on patrolled beaches
- at major sporting stadium
- in motor vehicles carrying children under the age of 16 years
- at all public and private health facilities and all schools, and for five metres beyond their boundaries.

For further information on Queensland's tobacco laws, visit the Queensland Health website or call **13 QGOV (13 7468)**.

Where can I get support to quit?

- **Quitline (13 7848)**

Quitline is available 7 days a week offering support, encouragement and resources to people who want to quit smoking.

If you're interested in quitting or would just like some information, call Quitline 13 7848.



- **Talk to your health professional**

Discuss quitting smoking with your general practitioner (GP), pharmacist or community health worker and plan your quit strategy together.

- **Consider using pharmacotherapy**

Different products are available to help you quit smoking.

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) includes patches, gum, lozenges, inhalers and mouth spray. The aim of NRT products is to replace some of the nicotine from cigarettes without the harmful chemicals found in tobacco smoke, which reduces withdrawal symptoms, such as cravings and anxiety.

Varenicline and Bupropion Hcl and are non-nicotine medications that are also effective in helping smokers to quit. These medications are available only on prescription. Your GP can help decide if they are suitable for you.

- **Other Resources**

- Visit **Quit HQ** for more information on quitting smoking at www.qld.gov.au/quithq
- Download the '**MyQuitBuddy**' app on your smartphone. For further information visit www.quitnow.gov.au
- Download the '**Quit for You – Quit for Two**' app on your smartphone. For further information visit www.quitnow.gov.au