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The health benefits of smoking cessation (quitting) are immediate and substantial. Almost immediately, a person's circulation begins to improve and the level of carbon monoxide in the blood begins to decline. (Carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless gas found in cigarette smoke, reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen.) A person's pulse rate and blood pressure, which may be abnormally high while smoking, begin to return to normal. Within a few days of quitting, a person's sense of taste and smell return, and breathing becomes increasingly easier.

People who quit smoking live longer than those who continue to smoke. After 10 to 15 years, a previous tobacco user's risk of premature death approaches that of a person who has never smoked. Women who stop smoking before becoming pregnant or who quit in the first 3 months of pregnancy can reverse the risk of low birth weight for the baby and reduce other pregnancy-associated risks.

There are also many benefits to smoking cessation for people who are sick or who have already developed cancer. Smoking cessation reduces the risk for developing infections, such as pneumonia, which often causes death in patients with other existing diseases.

Quitting smoking may cause short-term after-effects, especially for those who have smoked a large number of cigarettes for a long period of time. People who quit smoking are likely to feel anxious, irritable, hungry, more tired, and have difficulty sleeping. They may also have difficulty concentrating. Many tobacco users gain weight when they quit, but usually less than 10 pounds. These changes do subside. People who kick the habit have the opportunity for a healthier future and a healthier future for the loved ones around them.

A number of organizations provide information and materials about where to find help to stop smoking. State and local health agencies often have information about community smoking cessation programs. The local or county government section in the phone book (blue pages) has current phone numbers for health agencies. Information to help people quit smoking is also available through community hospitals, the yellow pages (under "drug abuse and addiction"), public libraries, health maintenance organizations, health fairs, bookstores, and community help lines.



The Family Place  
Parent Child Center  
319 US Route 5 South  
Norwich VT 05055

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
White River Junction, VT  
05001  
Permit #75



## Healthy Young Lungs

Chronic coughing and wheezing; chest discomfort; decreased lung function; severe lower respiratory tract infections, such as bronchitis or pneumonia; severe asthma and increased chance of developing asthma. Having any one of these conditions would make blowing out the candles on a birthday cake difficult, even painful.

Secondhand smoke exposure is a known risk factor for lung cancer. Exposure to secondhand smoke is also called involuntary smoking or passive smoking. Approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths occur each year among adult nonsmokers in the United States as a result of exposure to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke is also linked to nasal sinus cancer and cancers of the cervix, breast, and bladder.

Secondhand smoke, also called environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), is the combination of two forms of smoke from burning tobacco products: sidestream smoke and mainstream smoke. Side-stream smoke, which makes up about half of all secondhand smoke, comes from the burning end of a cigarette, cigar, or pipe. Mainstream smoke is exhaled by the smoker.

Scientists do not know what amount of exposure to secondhand smoke, if any, is safe. Because it is a complex mixture of chemicals, measuring secondhand smoke exposure is difficult and is usually determined by testing blood, saliva, or urine for the presence of nicotine and inhaled particles. Nicotine, carbon monoxide, and other evidence of secondhand smoke exposure have been found in the body of nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke. Nonsmokers who live with smokers in homes where smoking is allowed are at the greatest risk for suffering the negative health effects of secondhand smoke exposure.

Tobacco use remains the single most preventable cause of death in the United States. Cigarette smoking accounts for nearly one-third of all cancer deaths in this country each year. Smoking is the most common risk factor for the development of lung cancer, which is the leading cause of cancer death. It is also associated with many other types of cancer, including cancers of the esophagus, larynx, kidney, pancreas, and cervix. Smoking increases the risk of other health problems, such as chronic lung disease and heart disease. Smoking during pregnancy can have adverse effects on the unborn child, such as premature delivery and low birth weight.

Smoking and exposure to smoke also causes

- Eye and nose irritation.
- Middle ear infections in children.
- Spontaneous abortion (miscarriage).
- Low birth-weight or small size at birth for babies of women exposed to secondhand smoke during pregnancy.
- Severe and chronic heart disease.
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- Adverse effect on cognition and behavior in children