

SMOKING

Background

Tobacco is a significant health problem for both adults and children. Smoke from cigarettes, pipes, and cigars contains over 4000 chemicals, including at least 50 of which cause, initiate, or promote cancer¹. Furthermore, smoking is the primary cause of 90% of all chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (a long term lung disease with symptoms of shortness of breath, increased mucus and coughing). Smokers are also at risk for heart disease and other illnesses.

Children deserve to be protected from second-hand smoke. Second hand smoke comes from the burning end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar and the smoke blown into the air by the smoker. There is actually a higher concentration of harmful substances (tar, nicotine, etc.) in second-hand smoke than what is inhaled by the smoker.

Children are especially at risk for health problems from second-hand smoke because they breathe in more air relative to their body size, their immune systems are less developed and they are lower to the ground. Therefore, they are more likely to breathe near, play on, chew on, or touch surfaces covered in smoke.

Children who are regularly exposed to second-hand smoke have a higher risk of: sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), coughing and wheezing, asthma, ear infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, heart disease and lower test scores in reading and math.

Smoking near a window or chimney, or turning on a fan or air purifier does not eliminate other people's exposure to second-hand smoke. The smoke gets trapped in hair, skin, clothing, walls, carpet, furniture, toys, etc. This is known as third-hand smoke. The harmful chemicals will linger in fabrics or on surfaces long after the tobacco has stopped burning.

What you can do

- Smoking should be forbidden in all areas occupied by children at all times.
- Implement a "no smoking" rule on daycare grounds.
- If any individual residing in the home of the daycare smokes, parents of the children attending the daycare facility must be made aware of this at the time of enrolment.
- If any of the daycare staff smoke, they should make sure that their clothes do not smell like smoke and preferably change their outside clothing (e.g., jacket worn while smoking) before attending to the children.
Note: smoking in cars or enclosed spaces allows smoke to accumulate in clothing!
- When going on walks or trips away from the daycare, avoid public areas or events where people are smoking or where they usually smoke.
- Set a good example. Smoking in front of children increases the likelihood that they will eventually smoke; it is therefore important that if you must smoke, do not smoke in front of the children.
- Offer cessation information to staff members who do smoke or consider offering incentives to help them quit.
- Promote smoke-free homes and cars to parents.

Smoking Cessation Aids

Health Canada. *On the road to quitting- guide to becoming a non-smoker.* http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/tobac-tabac/orq-svr/index_e.html

NB Lung Association. *Quitting Smoking.* http://www.lung.ca/protect-protegez/tobacco-tabagisme/quitting-cesser/how-comment_e.php

NB Anti-Tobacco Coalition. <http://www.nbatc.ca/>

Smokers Helpline: 1-877-513-5333

¹ NB Lung Association. *Smoking and Tobacco.* <http://www.nb.lung.ca/html/Programs/Smoking/index.htm>