

Fact Sheet 16—Facts About the Effects of Secondhand Smoke on Children

We are concerned about the effects secondhand smoke has on the health of infants and children. We are providing this information to increase your understanding about these serious health concerns. We have also provided you with information on how to get help to stop smoking or helping someone you know who is smoking around his or her children to quit.

Smoking around infants has been found to increase the risk of:

- Death of the newborn
- SIDS (Crib Death)
- More hospitalizations for illness like pneumonia and bronchitis

Smoking around children has been found to increase the risk of:

- Ear infections
- Allergic reactions
- Lung infections
- Lung cancer when they become adults
- Slower growth
- Lower ability to learn
- Behavior problems
- Lower lung function
- Asthma related problems
- Being hurt in a fire caused by a smoker
- Becoming smokers themselves

Ways to lower risks to your children's health from secondhand smoke:

- Do not smoke or allow smoking in your home.
- Ask people not to smoke around your children or take them to places that allow smoking.

What to do if you would like help to quit smoking yourself:

- Talk to your child's doctor or family doctor about how much you smoke and your desire to quit.
- Talk with the doctor about things that could help you quit like smoking cessation classes (Freedom from Smoking), private counseling, or medications to help you handle your smoking urges.

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- Ask your family and friends if they would help you by not smoking around you or if they would like to join you in quitting.
- Set a quit date and make plans to deal with concerns like dealing with stress, being around other smokers, or weight gain.
- Call the free Pennsylvania Quitline (1-877-724-1090) to sign up for free telephone counseling sessions.
- Don't get discouraged - it takes the average smoker 5-7 tries to quit and be free of cigarettes.