

THE DANGERS OF THIRDHAND SMOKE



Thirdhand smoke is the tobacco smoke contamination, or smoke residue, which remains after a cigarette, cigar or other combustible tobacco product has been extinguished. This residue contains toxins that linger in carpets, sofas, clothes, hair, skin and on other surfaces long after smoking has ceased. ¹ More research is currently being conducted on thirdhand smoke, but it is clear that it is a dangerous substance that can impact health.²

- Data indicate that most carcinogens in secondhand smoke stay indoors when people smoke indoors. These carcinogens and nicotine are known as thirdhand smoke.³
- Thirdhand smoke contains known cancer-causing toxins, posing a potential health hazard to nonsmokers who are exposed to it.²
- Children are particularly vulnerable to exposure to thirdhand tobacco smoke because they often crawl on carpets and furniture and put things in their mouths. Children have a smaller body mass, breathe faster, have less-developed defenses against environmental pollutants, and spend more time indoors.⁴
- Some of the deposited chemicals in THS can be reintroduced into the air and inhaled long after smoking has ceased.²
- Thirdhand smoke builds up over time and resists normal household cleaning. It can't be eliminated by airing out rooms, opening windows or using fans or air conditioners, or any other means of ventilation.⁵
- Protect against thirdhand smoke by including it in your organization's tobacco or fragrance policy.
- If you smoke, protect family, friends and coworkers by washing hands and hair and by changing clothes before coming into contact with others, especially infants and children.

Adopt a 100% smoke-free property policy to fully protect nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke.

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¹ American Academy of Pediatrics, Thirdhand Smoke Webpage, Accessed December 23, 2014.

² Environmental Science and Technology. Inhalable Constituents of Thirdhand Tobacco Smoke: Chemical Characterization and Health Impact Considerations. Sleiman et al., October 2014.

³ Journal of Tobacco Control. Thirdhand cigarette smoke in an experimental chamber: evidence of surface deposition of nicotine, nitrosamines and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and de novo formation of NNK. Schick et al., May 2013.

⁴ Dartmouth-Hitchcock Norris Cotton Cancer Center Factsheet on Thirdhand Smoke, Accessed December 23, 2014.

⁵ Environmental Health Perspectives. Thirdhand Tobacco Smoke: Emerging Evidence and Arguments for a Multidisciplinary Research Agenda.