

## Health

Health Secondhand smoke has no place in public indoor areas and workplaces, because it causes and triggers disease. Secondhand tobacco smoke, also called "Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS)," contains more than 130 toxic chemical compounds. More than 60 of these are known carcinogens &mdash; chemicals that are known to cause cancer. And yet cancers represent a small fraction of the number of diseases it causes. Below are some of the most common conditions caused or triggered by secondhand smoke, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 1999 estimates of how many are affected by each. In all, the EPA estimates 53,000 nonsmoking Americans die every year due to preventable exposure to secondhand smoke. Approximately 3,200 will have been Ohioans.

**Heart Disease** (Est. 35,000 &ndash; 62,000 deaths annually) (PDF) Secondhand smoke can cause heart attacks. It can also trigger heart attacks among people who are already at risk due to lifestyle choices or hereditary predispositions. **Triggers** Five minutes of exposure to secondhand smoke has been shown to activate the platelets that clot your blood. Your blood thickens, so your heart has to work harder to pump. As a result, very small amounts of exposure can trigger a fatal heart attack. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently published a statement in the *British Journal of Medicine*, saying that doctors should warn their patients who are at risk of heart disease to stay out of all indoor areas that permit smoking. **The Smoking Gun** A study of emergency room patients in Helena, Montana, found that their 100% Clean Indoor Air Law reduced the city's rate of heart attacks by 40%. But "35,000 to 62,000"... That's a big range! Unlike counting the number of people killed in, for example, a car crash, many factors can contribute to a heart attack. The EPA offers low and high estimates to account for those cases when secondhand smoke may have triggered a heart attack but was not necessarily the primary cause. From this perspective, 35,000 may be an inaccurately low estimate, while 62,000 may be inaccurately high. Health officials frequently cite the average estimate: 48,500. The bottom line, however, is whether Cleveland is willing to sacrifice any number of lives, when they can so easily be saved.

**Cancers** (Est. 3,000 deaths annually) (PDF) Out of more than 130 identified toxic chemicals found in secondhand smoke, more than 60 are known to cause cancer (PDF) in humans and animals &mdash; and not just lung cancer either. The U.S. Surgeon General states that breathing tobacco smoke can cause cancers of the cervix, kidney, pancreas, stomach, bladder, esophagus, larynx, lung, mouth, and throat. Though the evidence is not yet conclusive, there are studies underway to verify the link between tobacco smoke and breast, colon, liver and prostate cancers.

**Sudden Infant Death Syndrome &ndash; SIDS** (Est. 1,900 deaths annually) (PDF) **Children** **Low Birth Weight** (Est. 9,700 cases annually) (PDF) **Asthma Exacerbation** (Est. 400,000 cases annually) (PDF) **Middle Ear Infection** (Est. 700,000 cases annually) (PDF) **Lower Respiratory Tract Infections** &ndash; e.g., bronchitis & pneumonia (Est. 150,000 cases annually) (PDF) The Clean Indoor Air Campaign strives to make all public spaces and workplaces smoke free. Because smoking is a choice and breathing isn't. It's about health. It's about time. To find out more about the health effects of secondhand smoke, check out our list of links to health organizations around the world.