



## The dangers of thirdhand smoke

Thirdhand smoke is the tobacco smoke contamination, or smoke residue, that remains after a cigarette, cigar or other tobacco product has been extinguished. The toxins linger in carpets, sofas, clothes, hair, skin and on other surfaces long after smoking has ceased.

- Dangers of thirdhand smoke exposure include a higher risk of heart disease, stroke and other smoking related diseases.
- Thirdhand smoke is a health hazard for infants and children, who are particularly vulnerable because they are often held close to hair, clothes and skin. They can ingest tobacco residue by putting their hands in their mouths after touching contaminated surfaces.
  - Infants exposed are more likely to die of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
  - Infants and children have an increased risk of asthma. For those who already have asthma, symptoms can worsen.
- Once on surfaces, tobacco residue can easily be reintroduced into the air, resulting in particles that over time could contribute to cancer and breathing problems, like asthma.
- 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 confining smoking to only certain indoor areas.
- Protect against thirdhand smoke by including it in your organization's scent-free policy. If you do smoke, protect family, friends and coworkers by washing hands and hair and by changing clothes before coming in contact with nonsmokers, especially infants and children.

**Infants, children and nonsmoking adults are at risk of tobacco-related health problems when they breathe air or ingest or touch materials contaminated by thirdhand smoke.**



*Leading the way for tobacco-free environments across Maine*

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