

# Second-hand smoke fact sheet

## Second-hand smoke affects other people and is a real health risk, especially for children.

- Approximately 9,500 children are admitted into hospital in the UK every year because of tobacco smoke. Children are more likely to develop asthma or suffer chest infections if they are exposed to second-hand smoke.

## Second-hand smoke travels through the air and the home, and most of it is invisible.

- 83 % of second-hand smoke is in the form of a gas that is invisible to the eye. Even when a cigarette is extinguished, the invisible toxins in second-hand smoke can remain in a room for several hours. Not smoking in the home or car will minimise the number of these toxins in the air.

## Parents and carers want to protect their children from second-hand smoke and should be encouraged to do so.

- Parents and carers are often unaware of the specific health effects of second-hand smoke on children's health. Living with a smoker increases your chances of having asthma, glue ear, wheezing and coughs. Children living in a smoke-free environment are less likely to suffer respiratory problems and have days off school due to illness. Children who see their parents smoking are also much more likely to become smoking adults themselves.

## To make homes and cars smoke-free, smokers should go outside and close the door behind them.

- There are no safe levels of exposure to second-hand smoke. Ventilation or smoking at the back door still leaves a substantial amount of second-hand smoke in the house and the only way to completely reduce exposure to second-hand smoke is by smoking outside, and closing the door to prevent smoke travelling through the home.

## Smokers should always make sure that their decision to smoke does not affect other people.

- Standing at an open door or rolling the car window down allows smoke to drift into the home or car, where it can remain for several hours. Again, closing the door and moving away from it is the best way to protect others from tobacco smoke. Ask your friends and family to do the same. No one will be offended.



NHS Health Scotland would like to acknowledge the national second-hand smoke network and the REFRESH advisory team.