

The mission of the Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco-Free Living (TFL) is to implement and evaluate comprehensive tobacco control initiatives that prevent and reduce tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke.

The mission of the Louisiana Tobacco Control Program (LTCP) is to utilize evidence-based strategies in tobacco control surveillance, evaluation, program management, communication and resource development to advance policies promoting a tobacco-free Louisiana.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TFL AND LTCP:

Visit us online at

TobaccoFreeLiving.org

QuitWithUsLa.org

Asthma.dhh.louisiana.gov



QuitWithUsLa.Org 1.800.QUIT.NOW



FACTS UNFILTERED SERIES
DEVELOPED BY
THE LOUISIANA CAMPAIGN FOR
TOBACCO-FREE LIVING

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Asthma, Smoking and Secondhand Smoke



WHAT IS ASTHMA?

Asthma is a respiratory disease that affects many people. It is an inflammatory condition of the airways that causes airway obstruction, chest tightness, coughing and wheezing. Asthma is a condition that cannot be cured, but can be controlled. If not properly managed asthma can lead to other respiratory problems and can even be fatal.

If your child has been diagnosed with asthma, see your physician about an Asthma Action Plan.

THE TRUTH ABOUT ASTHMA AND SECONDHAND SMOKE

Asthma attacks occur as the result of triggers which irritate the airway systems, such as allergens, irritants and respiratory infections. One of the most damaging and preventable triggers is cigarette smoke.

Cigarette smoke irritates the tissues of the lungs and upper airways, prompting an attack. This reaction can produce coughing, wheezing, watery eyes, and a runny nose. Since environmental tobacco smoke can frequently cause an asthma attack, asthma sufferers are especially susceptible to the effects of secondhand smoke.

In the United States, nearly 6.7 million children suffer from asthma.

Asthma costs the U.S. \$16.1 billion a year in health care treatment.

In 2007, the CDC estimated that nearly 200,000 Louisiana residents are asthmatic.



KIDS AND SECONDHAND SMOKE

Secondhand smoke is the exhaled smoke from a cigarette or cigar that pollutes the air and can cause health problems when inhaled such as cancer, respiratory ailments and heart disease.

Children are especially at risk when they breathe secondhand smoke. Studies show that children of smokers are more likely to suffer asthma attacks, and their asthma gets worse too. Since they are still growing, children's bodies are greatly harmed by secondhand smoke.

Children of parents who smoke during or after pregnancy have a higher chance of suffering from illnesses such as bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma, allergies, coughs and ear infections.

Despite the risk of exposure to secondhand smoke, nearly 17% of Louisiana residents live in homes which allow smoking indoors.

Asthma is a lifelong disease, and is one of the illnesses associated with exposure to secondhand smoke. Asthma limits children's ability to be involved in physical activities due to respiratory discomfort and difficulty breathing. Furthermore, parents who smoke increase the chance that their child will develop asthma or that the condition will worsen.

Children of parents who smoke are 3 times more likely to have asthma.

An estimated 200,000 to one million asthmatic children have had their condition worsened by exposure to secondhand smoke.

Parents, friends and relatives of children with asthma should try to stop smoking and never smoke around an asthmatic child.



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF ASTHMA IN CHILDREN:

Shortness of breath
Chest tightness
Coughing
Wheezing

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF ASTHMA IN INFANTS:

Rapid breathing
Rattly cough
Excessive number of chest colds

COMPILED FROM THESE SOURCES:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Legacy Foundation, Louisiana Office of Public Health, & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN

The easiest way to protect children and give them the best chance at a healthy life is to provide them with a smoke-free environment.

A smoker's decision to quit smoking will positively impact everyone, both children and adults, by reducing secondhand smoke in the environment. When parents of children with asthma stop smoking, their child's asthma improves.

Apart from not smoking, parents should ask others not to smoke around their children. This includes family, friends, babysitters, childcare workers and teachers. It is important that you protect yourself and your children from the risks of tobacco and secondhand smoke. The healthiest thing you can do for someone with asthma is to prevent further attacks by creating a smoke-free environment.