Exposure to Tobacco Smoke

Smokers are not the only ones affected by smoking. Anyone who is exposed to tobacco smoke called secondhand smoke may be harmed. There is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure. There are also the toxins left behind after the lit tobacco is put out, called third-hand smoke.

Secondhand Smoke

- Secondhand smoke, also called environmental tobacco smoke, or ETS, is a mixture of the smoke from:
  - Burning tobacco that is not filtered
  - The smoker as he or she exhales
- Secondhand smoke exposure causes higher risk of heart disease and lung cancer in adults who do not smoke.
- Breathing secondhand smoke has immediate harmful effects on the heart and blood flow that can increase the risk for heart attack.
- **In children**, secondhand smoke can cause:
  - Acute respiratory infections such as colds and asthma
  - Ear problems such as infections and fluid
  - More frequent and severe asthma attacks
  - Higher risk of sudden infant death syndrome, also called SIDS
- This means that when you smoke, others around you, especially children are harmed by your smoke.

More on next page ➔

Learn more about your health care.
Third-Hand Smoke

- Toxins are present long after the person stops smoking. These form layers on every surface where smoking happened.
- In the home or car, these toxins are found in loose dust and on surfaces and they are released into the air over days, weeks and months.
- The clothes of a smoker and opening windows and doors of the home of a smoker can release toxins into the air for long periods of time.
- Children are at greater risk because they may crawl, play on, touch or mouth surfaces with third-hand smoke on them. Children also ingest much more dust than adults do.
- Smoking with an exhaust fan on or in another room away from others does not stop them from being exposed to the toxins in tobacco smoke.

Talk with your doctor if you have questions about quitting tobacco use, or call Ohio Quits at 1-800-Quit-Now or 1-800-784-8669.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.