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# Secondhand Smoke and Asthma

## Overview

Secondhand smoke (SHS) is a combination of the smoke given off by the burning end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar, and the smoke exhaled from the lungs of smokers. Asthma is a chronic respiratory disease characterized by episodes of inflammation and narrowing of small airways in response to asthma “triggers.” SHS is one of the leading triggers for an asthma attack. Individuals living with asthma learn to control their asthma by following a management plan developed with their health care provider and learning to avoid asthma triggers, such as SHS, that can cause an attack.

## Statistics

- In 2010, 17.2% of Nebraska’s adults, age 18 and older, reported they were current smokers. *Source: 2010 Nebraska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*
- In 2010, 12.2% of Nebraska’s adults, age 18 and older, had been told they have asthma at some point in their lives. *Source: 2010 Nebraska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*
- In 2002, 28% of Nebraska households with a current asthmatic, reported that smoking was allowed inside of their residence. *Source: 2002 Nebraska Adult Asthma Survey*
- In 2007, asthma costs the U.S. more than \$30 billion every year. These costs include the direct expenditure of treating asthma. *Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Asthma FAST FACTS, Accessed: December 14, 2011.*

## Effect

- Smoking not only affects the health of the smoker, but anyone exposed to his or her secondhand smoke.
- Secondhand smoke can trigger asthma episodes and increase the severity of attacks. Secondhand smoke is also a risk factor for new cases of asthma in preschool-aged children. *Source: Environmental Protection Agency, Accessed: December 14, 2011*
- Secondhand smoke can cause serious harm to children. An estimated 400,000 to one million asthmatic children have their condition worsened by exposure to secondhand smoke. *Source: American Lung Association, Accessed: December 14, 2011*
- Children with asthma that are exposed to secondhand smoke may have asthma attacks that are more severe or occur more often. *Source: Environmental Protection Agency, Accessed: December 14, 2011*

## Recommendations

- Smoking should not be allowed in the home or in the family car. Parents should only smoke outside the home or, better yet, quit smoking altogether. For more information on quitting smoking, visit the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline Website at [QuitNow.ne.gov](http://QuitNow.ne.gov).