

**P** is for  
protecting babies  
and children from  
secondhand  
smoke



Help those who depend  
on you the most

Tips for smokers living  
with children

About half the children in the UK live in a home where someone smokes. Most of the smoke from a cigarette goes into the air. Children growing up in smoky environments are breathing in secondhand smoke.

### “What’s wrong with secondhand smoke?”

Tobacco smoke contains poisonous gases, tar and thousands of toxic chemicals. These poisons get into the bodies of children who live in smoky atmospheres. Children are even more sensitive to smoke than adults as their bodies are young and still developing.

### “How does secondhand smoke harm children?”

Babies and children exposed to a smoky atmosphere are:

- Twice as likely to have asthma attacks and chest infections
- More likely to need hospital care in their first year of life
- Off sick from school more often
- More likely to get more coughs, colds and wheezes

### Medical research also shows they have:

- Much higher risk of cot death than the children of non-smokers
- Increased risk of meningitis
- More chance of getting ‘glue ear’, which can lead to partial deafness



### **“What can you do to protect babies and children?”**

You can help protect them by keeping their playing, sleeping and eating areas completely smoke free.

#### **Tips**

- Always smoke outside well away from children.
- When out and about with the family, find non-smoking areas.

### **“What can I do if my family and friends are smokers?”**

Let them know before they visit that you are keeping your home smoke free for your children’s health. Ask if they would help by smoking outside or before they visit. Explain that children get ill through secondhand smoke.



### “What about car journeys?”

Secondhand smoke gets even more concentrated inside a car. You can reduce children's travel sickness and make a positive difference to their health if you avoid smoking when they travel with you.

#### Tips if you have to smoke:

- On short trips smoke before you set off, rather than in the car.
- On longer trips, stop and smoke outside away from the children.



### “What other dangers do children face from smoking?”

As well as the harm caused by secondhand smoke, cigarettes are responsible for many accidents and injuries. Smoking is also a major cause of house fires.

#### Tips to avoid accidents

- Teach children that cigarette ends are hot and will burn if touched.
- Make sure smokers put out their cigarettes before going near children.

## Tips to reduce the risk of children starting a fire:

- Keep all smoking materials out of children's reach.
- Never leave a lit cigarette, lighters or matches unattended.
- Clear away ashtrays to prevent children playing with cigarette ends.

## “How can I discourage my children from wanting to smoke?”

Research shows that children who live with smokers are much more likely to start themselves. Smoking is a difficult habit to break, so it is important to encourage children never to start.

### Tips

- Tell children from your experience what you don't like about smoking and why you don't want them to start.
- If you or other family members regret starting, explain why.



### “What else can I do?”

The best thing you can do to protect your children is to keep them away from all cigarettes and smoky places. The ideal thing would be for all smokers to try to stop.

### **NHS Smoking Helpline: 0800 169 0 169**

For anyone considering stopping there is plenty of help and support available. Call the **NHS Smoking Helpline 0800 169 0 169**. Your call will be answered by a friendly adviser who will offer expert and practical support. You can get an information pack with details on how to stop smoking and the different treatments available.



**Local NHS Stop Smoking services** have now been set up around the country. Helpline advisers can put you in touch with a service near your home.

### **NHS Pregnancy Smoking Helpline: 0800 169 9 169**

Women who smoke or are exposed to secondhand smoke during their pregnancy are at risk of complications.

A special **NHS Pregnancy Smoking Helpline 0800 169 9 169** has been set up with trained advisers, who understand the different issues pregnancy brings. They will provide information and advice to help you. They will also offer to call you back at a time to suit your needs.

### **Who else can help?**

Your doctor, practice nurse, health visitor, midwife or pharmacist can also provide advice on stopping smoking. Ask them about the treatments available on prescription.

Visit the campaign website at [www.givingupsmoking.co.uk](http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk)


Local information

[www.givingupsmoking.co.uk](http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk)



**NHS Smoking Helpline**  
**0800 169 0 169**

Textphone 0800 169 0 171

**Don't give up giving up.** 

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