

# SECONDHAND SMOKE QUIZ

## Instructor's Answer and Discussion Guide

**Question 1:** How many chemicals are found in secondhand smoke, some of which are known to cause cancer?

**Answer:** a. More than 4,000

**Further Information:** Secondhand smoke contains virtually all of the same chemicals that smokers inhale from a cigarette—more than 4,000 of them. At least 60 of the chemicals in secondhand smoke are known to cause cancer. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency classifies secondhand smoke as a “Group A” carcinogen—the same classification given to asbestos.

**Discussion Question:** Ask participants to share what they know about secondhand smoke.

**Facts to share during discussion:**

- Some of the chemicals in secondhand smoke include arsenic, formaldehyde, carbon monoxide, benzene and lead.
- Secondhand smoke is a toxic poison that causes cancer and many other health problems. There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Attempting to remove secondhand smoke from a room by ventilation (opening a window, turning on a fan, etc.) can remove the smell, but not the toxins.
- The chemicals in secondhand smoke will remain in the air for up to 3 hours after a cigarette is extinguished.
- Smoking in a confined space (such as a car) is 23 times more toxic than smoking in a house.

**Question 2:** Children exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to have which of the following illnesses?

**Answer:** e. All of the above

**Further Information:** Children exposed to secondhand smoke have an increased incidence of:

- more severe and frequent asthma attacks
- bronchitis and pneumonia
- ear infections
- wheezing and coughing spells
- decreased lung growth

**Discussion Question:** Now that you know some of the illnesses children can experience when exposed to secondhand smoke, what steps can you take to protect your children from exposure to secondhand smoke?

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## Instructor's Answer and Discussion Guide (cont.)

**Question 3:** What is secondhand smoke?

**Answer:** d. a and b

**Further Information:** Secondhand smoke consists of two different types of smoke. Approximately 85% of secondhand smoke is due to “sidestream smoke,” the smoke released from the burning cigarette, cigar or pipe, and the remainder is “mainstream smoke,” the smoke exhaled by a smoker.

**Question 4:** Children breathe 2–3 times more pollutants for every pound of body weight than adults do. True or False?

**Answer:** a. True

**Further Information:** Children are especially vulnerable to secondhand smoke and other chemicals in the air. Children’s bodies and lungs are still growing, and per pound of weight, they drink more water, eat more food, and breathe more air than adults. Therefore, when exposed to the same levels of secondhand smoke, children absorb more than adults.

**Discussion Question:** What are some other reasons children tend to be exposed to secondhand smoke at greater levels than adults?

**Possible answers:**

- Most children cannot decide where they live, eat and play. So, when someone around them chooses to smoke, they can’t always choose to leave.
- If mom smokes, infants and children typically receive very high levels of exposure due to being close to mom.
- A child’s breathing zone is closer to the floor than an adult’s, and chemicals tend to collect closer to ground level, where they also stick to carpet and furniture.

**Question 5:** Exposing children to secondhand smoke decreases their lung function and slows lung development. True or False?

**Answer:** a. True

**Further Information:** Health effects of secondhand smoke observed in the lungs of young children include weakened lung growth, respiratory infections, shortness of breath, increased (and more severe) asthma attacks, coughing and wheezing.

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## Instructor's Answer and Discussion Guide (cont.)

**Question 6:** Which of the following steps is an effective method of preventing a child's exposure to secondhand smoke?

**Answer:** d. None of the above

**Further Information:** When it comes to secondhand smoke and kids, the only way to protect children is to smoke outside the home, outside the car, and away from the kids. The 2006 Surgeon General's report confirmed that there is no such thing as a safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. That means that smoking in the next room, ventilating the air with windows and fans, or covering the odor are all ineffective ways to protect a child from secondhand smoke.

Aside from quitting smoking, stepping outside the home and car to smoke—every time you smoke—is the most effective way to protect children from secondhand smoke exposure.

**Question 7:** Secondhand smoke exposure increases the frequency and seriousness of children's asthma attacks. True or False?

**Answer:** a. True

**Further Information:** Asthma is a chronic lung disease. Characteristics include wheezing, coughing, chest tightness and breathlessness. Asthma is the leading cause of missed school days for children. Secondhand smoke causes more frequent and more serious asthma attacks in children who already have the disease.

**Discussion Question:**

- How many of you know a child with asthma?
- What are some of the symptoms that you have observed?
- What steps can you take to reduce a child's risk of exposure to secondhand smoke?

**Possible answers:** Create a smoke-free environment. Always smoke outside the home and car and choose not to take your children into any businesses or homes that allow smoking. You can also take time to educate your family and friends on the importance of keeping the air around children smoke-free.

**Summarize the Session:**

- Thank the parents for participating and for sharing what they know about secondhand smoke.
- Ask if there are any further questions.
- Provide parents with the educational flyer, "A Special Message for Parents," and the Parent Educational Packet.