

Thirdhand Smoke

What is thirdhand smoke?

- Thirdhand smoke is the residual substances from tobacco smoke that stick to indoor surfaces.
- Thirdhand smoke contains cancer-causing substances and poses a potential health hazard to those who are exposed to it, especially children.
- Infants, children and nonsmoking adults may be at risk of tobacco-related health problems when they inhale, ingest or touch substances containing thirdhand smoke. Thirdhand smoke is a relatively new concept, and researchers are still studying its possible dangers.

Where is thirdhand smoke found?

- Thirdhand smoke clings to hair, skin, clothes, furniture, drapes, walls, bedding, carpets, dust, vehicles and other surfaces, even long after smoking has stopped.
- Thirdhand smoke residue builds up on surfaces over time and resists normal cleaning. Thirdhand smoke can't be eliminated by airing out rooms, opening windows, using fans or air conditioners, or confining smoking to only certain areas of a home. In contrast, secondhand smoke is the smoke and other airborne products that come from being close to burning tobacco products, such as cigarettes.
- The smell of tobacco smoke when no one is smoking is caused by thirdhand smoke.

How can thirdhand smoke be avoided?

The only way to protect nonsmokers from thirdhand smoke is to create a smoke-free environment, whether that is a private home or vehicle, or in public places, such as hotels and restaurants.

If you smoke, consider making a quit plan with the help of NDQuits. NDQuits offers free advice and free tobacco cessation products to qualified enrollees. Call 1.800.QUIT.NOW or visit www.ndhealth.gov/ndquits for more information or to enroll.

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Source:

Mayo Clinic website – www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/expert-answers/third-hand-smoke/faq-20057791

For more information, contact:
Tobacco Prevention & Control Program
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Bismarck, N.D. 58505-0200
701.328.3398 or 800.280.5512 / www.ndhealth.gov/tobacco

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