



## Secondhand Smoke and Pets

A brief review of what is secondhand smoke and why it affects our pets.

Secondhand smoke is composed of sidestream smoke (the smoke released from the burning end of a cigarette) and exhaled mainstream smoke (the smoke exhaled by the smoker).

Did you know that exposing your pets to secondhand smoke is just as dangerous as it is for people? The smoke poses some special dangers to pets, as they may get cancer, heart disease, skin and eye problems, bronchitis, pneumonia and other lung problems. Notice these are some of the same health effects on people.

Pets ingest the waste and toxins when they groom themselves. The waste and toxic particles from smoke on carpets, furniture and clothes can get onto their fur, feathers, and then onto their skin.

Pay attention to your pet and their behavior around secondhand smoke. They'll exhibit signs and symptoms including frequent blinking of eyes, watery eyes and avoidance of the smoke.

What are some ways pets can help you quit? They give you a good reason to quit; they can give you a lot of positive support; they can help distract you from cravings; they can help you stay active; and they remind you of what's important in life: eating, stretching, sleeping and being happy!

Finally, keep taking care of your pet. Avoid tobacco smoke; it's good for both you and your pet. Once you quit, ask people who smoke to follow these rules: smoke outside and away from your pet; wash hands before touching your pet as the nicotine and toxins on your hands transfer to them; and don't smoke in your vehicle, even when pets aren't in the car with you.

For more information, call the Tobacco Prevention/Control Program Coordinator at 224-4914 or 1-800-224-4914.

