



## Second and Third-Hand Smoke

Breathing in smoke from cannabis or commercial tobacco is harmful because it contains dangerous chemicals that can harm the body. Exposure to second and third-hand smoke increases health risks for everyone. To keep everyone safe, consider vapour exposure to be just as risky as smoke exposure.

### WHAT IS SECOND-HAND SMOKE?

Second-hand smoke comes from burning cannabis or commercial tobacco products and from the smoke exhaled by someone smoking. Breathing it in can harm your health, causing heart and lung problems and even cancer. It can also make you feel high because of THC in cannabis.

Some people are more likely to be harmed by second-hand smoke. These include infants, children, pregnant people, older adults, and those with heart and lung problems. Here are some ways second-hand smoke can be harmful:

- It can lead to miscarriages, stillbirths, and birth defects
- Infants might be born too small or too early
- There is a greater chance of sleep-related infant death
- It can lead to lung infections and long-term breathing problems
- It can increase ear infections from fluid buildup in the middle ear

### WHAT ABOUT VAPING?

Scientists are currently studying the health effects of second- and third-hand vapour. Meanwhile, non-users can be exposed to harmful chemicals in vapour and aerosols. To protect yourself and others, treat vaping exposure the same as smoking exposure. →

## WHAT IS THIRD-HAND SMOKE?

Third-hand smoke is the residue that's left behind from second-hand smoke. Third-hand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals.

- Smoke doesn't just disappear. It remains in houses, apartments, vehicles, and hotel rooms.
- It gets trapped in hair, skin, fabric, carpet, furniture, and toys, for hours or even days after the smoke source is put out.
- It may leave a yellowish-brown residue on ceilings and walls, or even a stale smoke odour.
- It can cling to natural household dust, and can be absorbed through the skin and ingested by infants and children who are playing on these surfaces and putting their hands in their mouths.
- Exposure to third-hand smoke has been linked to liver, lung, and skin problems.

## HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AND OTHERS FROM SECOND AND THIRD-HAND SMOKE?

- The best thing you can do for your health and the health of others is quit or reduce the use of cannabis, commercial tobacco, and vapour products.
- Keep your home and vehicle smoke and vapour-free to protect everyone's health. Smoke or vape outdoors, away from open windows, air intakes, and doorways.
  - Wear a "smoking shirt or jacket" and remove it before coming back inside. Hang it outside.
  - Wash your hands and face with soap and water after smoking and vaping.
- Remember, it's against the law to smoke or vape in a vehicle with anyone under the age of 16.

If you want to quit or reduce your cannabis, commercial tobacco, and vapour use, talk to a primary care provider (such as a doctor or nurse practitioner). You can also access the following cessation resources below:

- [BC Smoking Cessation Program](#) provides eligible BC residents access to commercial tobacco cessation aids, including:
  - Non-prescription nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products
  - Prescription cessation medication
- [About Cannabis FAQs](#) provides information and resource support on reducing cannabis use.
- [Talk Tobacco](#) is a free confidential program that provides culturally appropriate support for quitting smoking, vaping, and commercial tobacco use for First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and urban Indigenous communities.
- [Alcohol & Drug Information and Referral Service](#) is available 24/7 for those worried or concerned about someone else. Call 1-800-663-1441.
- [QuitNow](#) offers free information, support, and counselling from trained professionals by phone, text, or email.