

What are the health risks associated with secondhand smoke?



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Q. What are the health risks associated with secondhand smoke?

A. Smoking and secondhand smoke can be linked to the rising number of lung cancer cases in Singapore.

Secondhand smoke, also known as environmental tobacco smoke, is the involuntary inhalation of cigarette smoke by nonsmokers.

Tobacco smoke contains cancer-causing compounds including nicotine, benzene, carbon monoxide, as well as other toxic small particles which measure less than 2.5 micrometer in diameter.

When inhaled into the deepest parts of the lungs, these particles can cause numerous health problems.

They may damage the DNA in normal cells, cause them to become abnormal and continuously replicate to form malignant growths such as lung cancer.

Many studies have also revealed that passive smokers are on average 20 to 30 per cent more likely to develop lung cancer and cardiovascular disease, as compared to those who are not exposed to cigarette smoke.

In addition, cigarette smoke in the environment has been associated with a range of respiratory diseases such as asthma, sinusitis and pneumonia.

More evidence have emerged recently that link secondhand smoke to diabetes, as it has been found to reduce insulin sensitivity, the hormone that regulates blood sugar in the body.

Although smoking is banned in many public areas in Singapore, it is more important to encourage your loved ones to stop smoking for the benefits of their own health and that of their family and friends.

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