



Smoking, Vaping & Asthma:

The Impact of Tobacco, E-Cigarette Aerosols, and Air Pollutants

Tobacco use significantly worsens asthma symptoms and can lead to more severe disease over time. Both active use and exposure to secondhand and thirdhand smoke or aerosol pose serious risks to individuals with asthma.

Effects of Tobacco use on Asthma

- **Increased Symptoms:** Smoke irritates the airways, leading to more frequent and severe asthma flares. Chronic coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath can also occur.
- **Effects on Medication:** Tobacco use can make asthma medicines less effective, making it harder to control symptoms.
- **Effects on Daily Activities and Athletics:** Tobacco use worsens asthma symptoms by irritating airways and reducing lung function, making breathing more difficult during physical activity.
- **Faster Lung Function Decline:** As we age, lung function naturally declines but tobacco use leads to a faster decline in lung function and increases the risk of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

Secondhand Smoke

Secondhand smoke is smoke that is inhaled when others are smoking in the area. It contains over 7,000 chemicals, many of which are toxic and can trigger asthma symptoms. Exposure to secondhand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer, heart disease, and respiratory illnesses that include asthma and COPD.



Thirdhand Smoke

Thirdhand smoke occurs when tobacco smoke leaves a toxic residue of nicotine and other chemicals on surfaces, skin, hair, fur, and fabrics such as clothing, curtains or furniture, even after the air has cleared. Thirdhand smoke can result in allergic and respiratory problems, including asthma symptoms, and is harmful to all people, especially children and nonsmokers.

Protective Measures

- **Quit Smoking:** The only way to completely protect against secondhand smoke and thirdhand smoke to reduce asthma symptoms and prevent further lung damage due to smoking is to quit or to never start. American Lung Association's Freedom from Smoking® program offers proven and effective quit strategies and guidance.
- **Make a Smoke-Free/Vape-Free Pledge:** Do not allow smoking or vaping inside or around your home, workplace or car.
- **Avoid Contact:** Do not allow smoking or vaping near you, your children, or your pets. Stay away from places where smoking occurs to reduce the effects of secondhand and thirdhand smoke.
- **Clean Regularly:** Clean and ventilate indoor spaces to help reduce thirdhand smoke chemicals that remain in the air or attach to surfaces.