

Place in Prevention/Second Hand Smoke and Education/Parents

Surrounded by Second-Hand Smoke



Tobacco smoke is a well-known trigger of asthma attacks. Reducing exposure to smoke can aid in relieving asthma symptoms. U.S. health data from 1999 to 2006 shows that there was a 33 percent decline in symptoms among kids who were not exposed to smoke. Unfortunately, even when no one in a family smokes, children are vulnerable to second-hand smoke from neighbors who light up. Smoke can seep through walls and shared ventilation systems in multi-unit dwellings. In fact, children living in apartments have more cotinine in their blood, a marker of tobacco exposure, than kids raised in smoke-free, detached homes. Cotinine is a byproduct of tobacco that can initiate detrimental physiologic and cognitive changes in children at increased levels.

One study published in *Pediatrics*, analyzing data from a survey of about 5,000 children between the ages of six and eighteen, showed that children raised in apartments had 45 percent more cotinine in their blood than children in detached homes. A complementary study featured in the same issue of *Pediatrics* revealed that as smoke-free laws get stricter, kids' asthma symptoms improve. Tougher laws have also been associated with a significant decrease in cotinine levels in children and adolescents. Hopefully these kinds of studies will encourage municipalities to begin banning smoking in multi-unit housing.

Source: Fox News, Dec. 2010, "Study: Kids May Be Exposed to Second-Hand Smoke by Neighbors",
<http://www.foxnews.com/health/2010/12/14/study-kids-exposed-second-hand-smoke-neighbors/>