

SECONDHAND SMOKE AND YOUR BABY

You have worked hard through your pregnancy to protect your baby and give her the best possible start. You love your baby and want to do what is best for her. Your best friend comes over to congratulate you and bring you a baby gift. A few minutes later, she starts to light a cigarette. What should you do?

Here is some information you might want to share:

Babies whose mothers smoke while pregnant and babies who are exposed to secondhand smoke after birth are more likely to die from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) than babies who are not exposed to cigarette smoke.

Babies whose mothers smoke while pregnant or who are exposed to secondhand smoke after birth have weaker lungs than other babies, which increases the risk for many health problems.

Secondhand smoke exposure causes acute lower respiratory infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia in infants and young children.

Secondhand smoke leads to the development of asthma in children. It also makes asthma worse in a million asthmatic children.

Secondhand smoke causes ear infections and behavior problems. It may even cause heart disease and cancer later in life.



Photo by Howard G. Buffett

Tobacco smoke contains over 250 carcinogenic (cancer-causing) chemicals, including:

- Carbon monoxide
- Formaldehyde
- Hydrogen cyanide
- Acrolein
- Ammonia
- Pyridine
- Nitrogen oxides
- Benzene
- Nicotine

There is no safe level for any of these agents for human exposure.

So when people you love want to light up around that precious child of yours, you are doing the right thing to ask them to please take it outside. Parents can't protect their babies from every bad thing in the world, but we can protect them from secondhand smoke!