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PASSIVE SMOKE

FACTS ABOUT PASSIVE SMOKE

When you are exposed to smoke in the environment it is called involuntary or "passive smoke." Passive smoke is a combination of two types of smoke: 1) the "sidestream" smoke released from the burning tobacco; and 2) "mainstream" smoke exhaled by the person who smokes. Mainstream cigarette smoke is a mixture of over 4,000 substances, 40 of which are known or suspected cancer-causing agents (carcinogens) in humans. Sidestream smoke contains all these same carcinogens and many of them are more concentrated because the lower burning temperature of a smoldering cigarette burns up fewer carcinogens. In a report released in 1993, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) declared that "the widespread exposure to environmental tobacco smoke in the United States represents a serious and substantial public health impact." The EPA further concludes that in adults, passive smoke is a Class A (known human) carcinogen responsible for approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths annually in U.S. non-smokers.

GROUPS OF PEOPLE AT RISK

Anyone breathing passive smoke may experience runny nose, eye irritation, sneezing, headaches and coughing. There are groups of people who may have more severe problems. Those at risk for severe problems are fetuses and newborns, children and teens and people with asthma or other respiratory conditions. All other non-smokers are also at risk.

Fetuses and Newborns

When women smoke during pregnancy, the oxygen content of fetal blood is lowered and the carbon monoxide level is raised. This increases the risk of miscarriage, premature birth, stillbirth or death in early infancy. Babies exposed to smoke in the womb generally have lower birth weight and shorter length which increases the risk for many other complications. Pregnant women who stop smoking during their pregnancy may decrease the risk of potential health problems in their newborns.

Children and Teens

Countless studies have proven that passive smoke affects the health of children. Both the Surgeon General and the EPA strongly urge that smoking in the presence of children be avoided. Studies show that children exposed to cigarette smoke in the home have more upper respiratory infections and more difficulty recovering from upper respiratory infections. These children may have more problems with chronic cough and chronic middle-ear infections. Lung problems caused or aggravated by passive smoke in childhood can extend into adult life. Children in households where one or both parents smoke have twice the amount of bronchitis, pneumonia and are hospitalized more frequently before their first birthday than children of non-smoking parents.

If both parents smoke, teens are more likely to become smokers themselves. Teenage smoking is a major health problem. If teens continue to smoke they may find it difficult to quit. As a result, they suffer greater long-term health effects. Smoking is a proven risk factor for cancer, heart disease and

progressive lung diseases like emphysema.

People with Asthma and Other Respiratory Conditions

Passive smoke is a major cause of respiratory symptoms. Studies show it may be a major factor in the development of asthma in children under five. Smoking in any room in the home, in the automobile and/or smoke odor on clothing, skin and hair can be enough to cause respiratory symptoms to worsen, immediately or slowly over days. An infant, child or adult with asthma may have more emergency room visits and may require more medication for longer periods of time to control asthma because of exposure to passive smoke.

Non-Smokers

The risk of lung cancer is two times higher in a non-smoker living with a person who smokes. The Surgeon General states that passive smoking "is a cause of disease, including lung cancer, in healthy non-smokers" and several studies have strongly linked passive smoke with heart disease.

STEPS TO AVOID PASSIVE SMOKE

- Keep your home and automobile free from passive smoke.
- Smoking should never be allowed in your bedroom.
- Have guests and family members smoke outside.
- If family members are smoking, ask them to consider quitting.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse about smoking cessation programs available at National Jewish and in the community.
- Sit in non-smoking sections of public areas (restaurants, airports, shopping malls, etc.). Visit restaurants and shopping centers that are smoke-free.
- Contact your local non-profit organization for more information. The American Lung Association, the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association all have information about smoking and health.

THE ROLE OF NATIONAL JEWISH

Continuing research shows that passive smoke is harmful to everyone's health. Physicians and nurses at National Jewish are actively involved in promoting smoking cessation and educating the public regarding the health hazards of smoking. Our staff works with organizations such as the American Lung Association and the American Cancer Society to develop programs and campaigns that decrease the detrimental health effects of smoking and passive smoke. National Jewish specializes in patient care, medical research and education in the fields of chronic respiratory disease and immunologic disorders.

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Note: This information is provided to you as an educational service of National Jewish. It is not meant to be a substitute for consulting with your own physician.

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National Jewish Medical and Research Center is the nation's leading treatment center for respiratory diseases and immune disorders. National Jewish offers the following services to provide

current information on respiratory, immunologic diseases and treatment options:

[Lung Line](#) 1-800-222-LUNG (5864) Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM-4:30 PM, Mountain Time. Registered Nurses can answer questions and provide educational literature on respiratory and immunologic diseases. Lung Line also provides information on the treatment options available at the National Jewish Center.

[PHYSICIAN LINE](#) 1-800-NJC-9555 Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM-5:00 PM, Mountain Time. Provides physicians direct access to National Jewish for patient referrals and medical consultations.

[CASE MANAGER LINE](#) 1-800-573-LUNG Monday-Friday 8 AM-5 PM Mountain Time.

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