

Thirdhand Smoke, what's the big deal?

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Health Education Council

Thirdhand smoke is difficult to detect in your home because even in the absence of stains and odors, thirdhand smoke may still be present. Thirdhand smoke is the tobacco smoke that remains after smoking has ceased. The contaminants found in thirdhand smoke such as carcinogenic chemicals can linger in clothing, walls, carpet, furniture, and more. As the contaminants settle onto surfaces and remain there for extended periods of time, they continue to expose you and your loved ones to harmful chemicals that can negatively affect your health.

Young children and pets are the most vulnerable when it comes to thirdhand smoke. Young children can be exposed to it when they crawl on the floor and bring their hands or other objects to their mouth as most young children do. Pets can also be exposed to thirdhand smoke when they groom themselves after spending time lying on contaminated floors or furniture.

A solution to preventing thirdhand smoke contamination in your home and car is to prohibit smoking in these areas like you would to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke. In the case that your home or belongings are contaminated with thirdhand smoke you can thoroughly clean and wash them regularly. If you live with someone who smokes you can suggest they smoke outside and change their clothes once they come back inside and wash their hands.

If you or someone you know needs help quitting, call 1-800-NoButts or 1-800-45-No Fume