True or False?

Do you know the facts about secondhand smoke?
Answer the following to find out.

1. Secondhand smoke doesn’t make you at risk for emphysema or lung cancer.
   A. True  B. False

2. Opening a window will keep you from breathing harmful smoke.
   A. True  B. False

3. There are 7000 dangerous chemicals in secondhand smoke.
   A. True  B. False

4. Thirdhand smoke may be dangerous to developing babies.
   A. True  B. False

5. Even non-smokers can die from health complications caused by secondhand smoke.
   A. True  B. False

Suffocating Smoke

Cara’s Story

Nineteen-year-old Cara was in her sophomore year of college. To help pay for rent and tuition, Cara took a part-time waitressing job at a local restaurant. One day, twenty minutes into her shift, she fell to the floor, gasping for air.

The problem? Cara’s asthma, triggered by the smoke circling through the air all day long. As Cara continued to breathe in the smoke, it caused an acute asthma attack. She died within minutes.

Yes, Cara’s story is rare. Most people who die from secondhand smoke are exposed to it for years. In fact, researchers believe that up to 50,000 people per year die from complications from secondhand smoke, like lung cancer and heart disease. Still, Cara’s story shows that secondhand smoke can also have immediate effects with deadly results.

Talking Back

Don’t just stand there when someone nearby is lighting up. Protect your lungs and your life by speaking up. You can use one of these lines:

• “Do you mind going outside to smoke?”
• “Can you hold off until I’m out of the car? I don’t want to smell like smoke.”
• “Smoke makes me feel sick. I’m going to leave until you’re finished.”
• “I’d prefer if you didn’t smoke around me.”
The Short-Term Effects of Secondhand Smoke

You already know that smoking is bad for you, but check out the short-term effects of secondhand smoke:

- Coughing
- Frequent colds
- Chest discomfort
- Reduced lung function
- Lung infections, like bronchitis or pneumonia
- Asthma attacks

Young children and pets are at even greater risk of harm from secondhand smoke – it can cause brain tumors, ear infections, asthma, allergies, tooth decay and Crohn’s disease, amongst other issues.

The Same Risks

Long-term Effects of Secondhand Smoke

Research has shown that being exposed to secondhand smoke over a long period of time increases your risk for:

- Lung cancer
- Heart disease
- Emphysema
- Premature death

That’s not all: Secondhand smoke can also increase your chances of developing breast cancer, leukemia and other diseases.