

Children Deserve A Smoke-Free Ride

Asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, middle ear infections and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. These are all very serious childhood conditions associated with exposure to second-hand smoke. Yet, many parents who smoke don't always make the connection between their behavior and serious health consequences for their children.

There are more than 4,000 dangerous chemicals in cigarette smoke. In a vehicle, the concentrations of second-hand smoke can rise to 27 times greater than in a smoker's home, and are potentially up to 20 times more toxic. Because children's bodies are still developing, they are especially vulnerable to the poisons in second-hand smoke. They also have less developed immune systems, so they're more vulnerable to illness. There is no safe way to smoke in a car with children. Opening car windows doesn't make it safer. Even under full ventilation, particle concentration in vehicles is at least 13 times greater than outdoor concentrations. With no ventilation, this number climbs as high as 300 times the outdoor particle concentration.

Supported by the Government of Ontario, the Ontario Lung Association recently launched its Campaign for a Smoke-free Ride, a province-wide education campaign urging parents not to smoke in their cars when children are passengers. It aims to connect with smokers across the province through advertising, community events, a toll-free information line and a dedicated Website (www.smokefreeride.ca).

New legislation banning smoking in vehicles with children under 16 came into effect in Ontario on January 21, 2009. By giving their children a smoke-free ride, parents are protecting their children's health, and taking a step towards improving their own health as well.

Please help us make all vehicles carrying children smoke free.



8 TIPS TO HELP PARENTS MAKE THE RIDE SMOKE FREE

- 1) Talk to your kids. When they understand that you are committed to giving them a smoke-free ride because you love them and want to protect them, they are more likely to give you support and encouragement.
- 2) Put a no-smoking sticker in the car to remind everyone that it's officially a smoke-free zone.
- 3) Clear out the ashtray and fill it with sugar-free candies or change.
- 4) Keep several packs of sugar-free gum in the glove compartment.
- 5) Lock your cigarettes in the trunk before you get in the car, and retrieve them when you've reached your destination.
- 6) When planning your trip, leave yourself enough time to step outside for a cigarette before and/or after getting in the car with your kids.
- 7) Ask your doctor about nicotine replacement therapies to help control cravings while you're in the car.
- 8) Reward yourself with a music CD, a coffee card or other treat after the first week of smoke-free driving.

To speak to a Certified Respiratory Educator, call 1-888-344-LUNG (5864)

The Ontario Lung Association has many resources of interest to child care providers and parents on issues such as asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia. To learn more, please visit: www.on.lung.ca or call 1-888-344-LUNG (5864) to speak to a Certified Respiratory Educator.