

## DON'T LET CHILDREN BREATHE YOUR SMOKE



**Front of Cigar Package  
(representation only)**



**Back of Cigar Package  
(representation only)**

Smoking near babies and children exposes them to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS). ETS is the smoke exhaled by a smoker (called mainstream smoke) or emitted by the tip of a burning cigar or cigarette (called sidestream smoke). Breathing in ETS is known as passive smoking.<sup>1,2</sup>

The environmental smoke from cigars contains many of the same toxins and carcinogens as cigarettes (such as carbon monoxide, nicotine, hydrogen cyanide, ammonia, benzene, nitrosamines, vinyl chloride, arsenic and hydrocarbons).<sup>1</sup>

The smoke from the burning tip of a cigar produces more toxic and cancer causing compounds than cigarette smoke when equal amounts of tobacco from cigarettes and cigars are burnt.<sup>3</sup> For example, compared to a cigarette, a large cigar releases up to 20 times more ammonia and around 80 to 90 times as much of the highly carcinogenic tobacco-specific nitrosamines.<sup>4</sup>

Cigars produce greater amounts of ETS because they contain more tobacco than cigarettes and they tend to be smoked for much longer time periods. As a result, non-smokers, including children, may be exposed to higher amounts of the many toxic compounds in the ETS from a cigar compared to that from a cigarette.<sup>1,5</sup>

ETS is a combination of poisonous gases, liquids and breathable particles that are harmful to health, particularly that of children. Even before birth, a developing baby can be affected by ETS, especially if the mother smokes during pregnancy. This increases the risk of miscarriage, low birthweight and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).<sup>2</sup>

In addition, children of parents who smoke are likely to have:

- more serious respiratory illnesses, such as croup, bronchitis and pneumonia<sup>2</sup>
- more middle ear infections<sup>2</sup>
- reduced lung function<sup>2</sup>
- a greater risk of developing asthma<sup>6</sup>
- more asthma attacks<sup>2</sup>
- an increased risk of respiratory symptoms such as coughing, breathlessness, phlegm and wheezing<sup>7</sup>
- a higher rate of meningococcal infections<sup>8</sup>
- more school absences.<sup>2</sup>

Giving up smoking is one of the best things you can do for your children's health and wellbeing. If you do smoke, make sure you do not smoke around your children or inside your home or car.

Decided to quit smoking? For help, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or call the Quitline on 131 848 or visit the Quitline web site at [www.quitnow.info.au](http://www.quitnow.info.au).

### **Sources**

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