

[IMAGE]

Generational Asthma

By Editorial Staff

For decades, we've known about the health dangers not only of smoking, but also of being exposed to smoke (i.e., living with a smoker) – secondhand smoke. But the dangers don't end there. Research suggests secondhand smoke is a risk factor for asthma in future generations, even without being exposed to smoke directly.

A child whose father was exposed to secondhand smoke as a child is more likely to experience non-allergic asthma at age 7: a 59 percent increased risk compared to children whose fathers were not exposed. That's generational asthma in a nutshell. If the child's father was exposed to secondhand smoke (and eventually became a smoker, the child's asthma risk is even higher: 72 percent compared to children whose fathers were not exposed / did not smoke.

Smoking is harmful enough to smokers and those directly exposed to it, with increased risks of most major illnesses including cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, tuberculosis, certain eye diseases, and immune system diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis (source: CDC). Now we know it's even worse: fathers can pass down at least one health condition (asthma) to their children without directly exposing their child to smoke.

If you're a smoker or live with a smoker, your doctor can help you / your family member choose the right smoking cessation program to quit – and stay quit. As this study, published in the *European Respiratory Journal*, suggests, the health benefits will last for generations.

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