Secondhand Smoke

Pre-reading

Questions: What is secondhand smoke?

Why is it harmful?

Definitions: Exhale – to breathe out

Expose – to put in harms way

Reading

Most everyone knows that smoking is harmful, but the effects of secondhand smoke are not as clearly understood. Secondhand smoke, which is also called environmental tobacco smoke, is the combination of smoke that is exhaled by a smoker and the smoke that comes from the burning end of a tobacco product. Most secondhand smoke comes from cigarettes, but some also comes from pipes and cigars. With secondhand smoke, people are exposed to smoke without choosing to smoke themselves.

Many times when people are exposed to secondhand smoke it is against their will. Children are especially at risk for being exposed to it against their wishes. People can breathe secondhand smoke in their homes, cars, at work, and at places such as bars and restaurants. Recently many new laws have banned smoking in public places. This has helped reduce the effects of secondhand smoke.

Secondhand smoke has many harmful effects. There are over 250 harmful chemicals found in secondhand smoke; 50 of these are cancer causing chemicals. According to the U.S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, secondhand smoke causes lung cancer in nonsmoking adults. It is also linked to many other forms of cancer. It is important to make people aware of this, especially smokers, so that there can be a continued effort to reduce secondhand smoke exposure.

In addition to cancer, secondhand smoke can cause other health problems. The smoke can irritate airways and damage the heart and blood vessels. It increases the risk of heart disease, and there may also be a link between secondhand smoke and strokes.

Children who are exposed to secondhand smoke have additional risks. For these kids, there is an increased risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), ear infections, colds, bronchitis, pneumonia, and asthma. Secondhand smoke exposure for kids even slows the growth of their lungs and causes coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath. Smoking should never occur around children, especially in enclosed areas.

There is no excuse for putting innocent nonsmokers at risk to the harmful effects of smoking. Positive changes to protect against the danger of secondhand smoke have begun. More efforts need to follow in order to stop the terrible effects of smoking.

Source: www.cancer.gov

Level 8.0
Understanding

1. How is the exposure to secondhand smoke different from actually smoking? ___________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

2. What does the word “banned” mean in this reading? _________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

3. Why do you think that children are especially at risk to being exposed to secondhand smoke against their wishes? _________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

4. How have some of the new laws helped to protect people against secondhand smoke? __________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

5. What are some of the effects of secondhand smoke? (List at least three.) _____________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

6. Where could a person learn more about smoking and secondhand smoke? _____________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

7. How could helping smokers understand the risks of secondhand smoke help in the fight to reduce the risk of this problem? _________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Tell about a time when you and/or your children were exposed to secondhand smoke.

Where did it happen? How did you feel at the time? How do you feel about it now?