



## Outdoor Smoke and Vapour

Breathing in smoke from cannabis and commercial tobacco can be harmful because it has chemicals that can lead to serious illnesses, including cancer. While anyone can be affected by outdoor smoke and vapour (including those nearby or passing by), infants, children, pregnant people, older adults and those with chronic conditions are at greater risk.

### WHAT IS SECOND-HAND SMOKE?

Second-hand smoke is smoke that comes directly from burning cannabis and commercial tobacco products (blunt, cigarette, cigar, hookah, joint, and pipe) as well as the smoke exhaled by the person smoking.

Exposure to second-hand smoke increases many health risks, especially for:

- Cancer
- Lung disease
- Heart disease
- Breathing problems

### WHAT ABOUT VAPING?

Scientists are currently studying the health effects of second- and third-hand vapour. Non-users can be exposed to harmful chemicals found in vapour and aerosols. To protect yourself and others, treat vaping exposure the same as smoking exposure.

### WHAT IS THIRD-HAND SMOKE?

Third-hand smoke is the residue that's left behind from second-hand smoke. Third-hand smoke may contain more than 250 chemicals.



- Smoke doesn't just disappear. The remaining outdoor smoke clings to items and are brought indoors on hands, hair, and clothing.
- This smoke can be inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through the skin even after the product is put out.
- Exposure to third-hand smoke has been linked to liver, lung, and skin problems.

### WHAT IS PM<sub>2.5</sub>?

Fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) is a type of air pollution that can harm your health, even at low levels. These tiny particles can be invisible at low levels and can make the air look hazy at higher levels.

When people smoke cannabis or commercial tobacco outside near doors, windows, or vents, it can increase the levels of PM<sub>2.5</sub> inside the building. Even if someone smokes outside, those harmful particles can travel inside from as far as nine meters away.

### WE NOW KNOW THAT:

- Physical exposure to outdoor smoke and vapour can be hazardous.
- Third-hand smoke, carried in on hands, hair, and clothing from smoking outdoors, can pollute indoor environments.
- The long-term risks associated with second and third-hand vapour are unknown.
- Outdoor smoke can drift indoors and continue to circulate and be an occupational hazard.

If you or someone you know is interested in quitting or decreasing their cannabis, commercial tobacco, and vapour use, encourage them to talk to a primary care provider (such as a doctor or nurse practitioner).

The following cessation resources can also be accessed:

- [BC Smoking Cessation Program](#) provides eligible BC residents access to commercial tobacco cessation aids, including:
  - Non-prescription nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products
  - Prescription cessation medication
- [First Nations Health Authority Benefits](#) offers additional coverage for nicotine replacement therapy for eligible participants.
- [Know Your Limits with Cannabis Guide](#) provides information and support on reducing cannabis use.
- [Talk Tobacco](#) is a free confidential program that provides culturally appropriate support for quitting smoking, vaping and commercial tobacco use for First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and urban Indigenous communities.
- [Alcohol & Drug Information and Referral Service](#) is available 24/7 for those worried or concerned about someone else. Call 1-800-663-1441.
- [QuitNow](#) offers free information, support, and counselling from trained professionals by phone, text, or email.