



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

Julius B. Richmond Center of Excellence

Mississippi State
UNIVERSITY

EMBARGO:

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NATIONAL SURVEY: CHILDREN REMAIN ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO SECONDHAND SMOKE, DESPITE NATION'S PROGRESS IN CLEAN INDOOR AIR POLICIES

American Academy of Pediatrics Julius B. Richmond Center of Excellence and American Legacy Foundation Urge Parents to Quit Smoking for Good

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Nearly half of all children in the United States are still exposed to secondhand smoke (SHS) each week, according to a new survey from the American Legacy Foundation®, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Julius B. Richmond Center of Excellence and researchers from Mississippi State University.

The groups say that while America has come a long way in changing the social perception of smoking in the past 10 years, children are still exposed to secondhand smoke at alarming rates, and they are encouraging parents who smoke to quit for good.

The Social Climate Survey of Tobacco found that 42 percent of children are exposed to SHS each week and there are public settings where children could be exposed that are still not smoke-free.

“Children especially deserve smoke-free environments, and all public places where children eat and play should be protected from secondhand smoke,” said Jonathan Klein, M.D., FAAP, director of the American Academy of Pediatrics Julius B. Richmond Center for Excellence. “Adults have the power to make healthier decisions for their children, and there needs to be more done to protect children in homes and cars from the dangers of secondhand smoke,” said Klein.

Other key findings include:

- While 75 percent of U.S households prohibit smoking in the home and car, that leaves 25 percent of American homes and cars unprotected.
- More non-smokers prohibit smoking in the home than smokers.
- More than one quarter of smokers report that their child had been exposed to secondhand smoke in their home.
- Among parents who smoke, only 53.5% prohibit smoking in the home and even fewer (22.5%) prohibit smoking in the family vehicle.
- 8.1 percent of US parents report that their child was exposed to SHS in an indoor public place in the past 7 days.

Over the years, studies have concluded that SHS smoke can be just as harmful as cigarette smoking. It is estimated that SHS exposure causes approximately 3,400 lung cancer deaths annually among adult nonsmokers in the United States. Even more disturbing is the fact that young children who are exposed to SHS are at a higher risk of developing asthma, ear infections and cavities. Infants are at a higher risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)

“The effects of secondhand smoke are serious and should not be minimized,” said Cheryl G. Heaton, President and CEO of the American Legacy Foundation, the only national public health foundation solely dedicated to reducing tobacco use in the U.S. “Addressing this issue starts with helping adult smokers and parents quit. Most know they are dealing

with a tough addiction, so pediatricians and others can provide the tools and resources for parents to re-learn their life without cigarettes,” Heaton said.

Today’s research coincides with the launch of a new partnership between *Parents*® magazine and the American Legacy Foundation, ***Parents Quit for Good***. The program provides a free quit plan for moms and dads powered by the foundation’s online cessation program, *Become an Ex*. The program launches just in time to help parents plan their New Years resolutions to quit smoking. This new collaborative will be featured in three upcoming issues of *Parents* starting in January, and includes a new Web site, www.ParentsQuitForGood.com where moms and dads can receive step-by-step assistance in identifying their own smoking triggers, in finding new ways to get through the day without cigarettes, and avoiding weight gain along the way.

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The Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control is an annual poll of public attitudes toward tobacco policies. The 2006 survey of 1,800 adults nationwide has a margin of error of ± 2.3 percent. Results for the on-screen tobacco questions are available at www.ssrc.msstate.edu/socialclimate. Please direct questions about the survey to Jon Klein, M.D., FAAP, at 585-275-7760 or Jonathan Winickoff, M.D., FAAP, at 617-724-1062

The SSRC was established in 1950 and has 50 research fellows and approximately 100 research associates. Through its Survey Research Unit, formed in 1981, it conducts approximately 25 research projects each year, many of which focus on social and cultural dimensions of health. Research at the center is sponsored by grants from the National Science Foundation, the National Cancer Institute, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institute of Mental Health, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Transportation, among others.

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. The AAP Julius B. Richmond Center, a national center of excellence funded by the Flight Attendant Medical Research Institute and the American Legacy Foundation, is dedicated to the elimination of children’s exposure to tobacco. For more information about the Richmond Center, see: <http://www.aap.org/richmondcenter/>

*The American Legacy Foundation® is dedicated to building a world where young people reject tobacco and anyone can quit. Located in Washington, D.C., the foundation develops programs that address the health effects of tobacco use, especially among vulnerable populations disproportionately affected by the toll of tobacco, through grants, technical assistance and training, partnerships, youth activism, and counter-marketing and grassroots marketing campaigns. The Foundation’s programs include **truth**®, a national youth smoking prevention campaign that has been cited as contributing to significant declines in youth smoking; **EX**®, an innovative public health program designed to speak to smokers in their own language and change the way they approach quitting; research initiatives exploring the causes, consequences and approaches to reducing tobacco use; and a nationally-renowned program of outreach to priority populations. The American Legacy Foundation was created as a result of the November 1998 Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) reached between attorneys general from 46 states, five U.S. territories and the tobacco industry. Visit <http://www.americanlegacy.org>.*

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