

UW-CTRI News Release

University of Wisconsin Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 25, 2008

Chris Hollenback, 262-3902 (desk)
217-2865 (cell)

Ch3@ctri.medicine.wisc.edu

Moira Harrington, 481-1505

Mh1@ctri.medicine.wisc.edu

200,000+ Wisconsin Kids Regularly Exposed to Secondhand Smoke at Home

Despite substantial progress in the past few years, hundreds of thousands of Wisconsin kids are still regularly exposed to high levels of secondhand smoke in their homes.

A report issued today by the UW Comprehensive Cancer Center and co-presented by the University of Wisconsin Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention (UW-CTRI) conservatively estimates that more than 211,000 children are exposed to tobacco smoke in their homes on most days. The report was presented today at the American Family Children's Hospital.

"Kids at home often breathe secondhand smoke for longer periods of time and at higher levels than adults do in workplaces or taverns. They are also most vulnerable and get sicker from it," said David Ahrens, lead author of the report, "Exposure to Secondhand Smoke in Wisconsin Homes."

The study also found that, in the past five years, the prevalence of smoking at home has decreased. Many more smokers now refrain from smoking in their homes if children are present. Also, the number of smokers is declining, as well as the number of cigarettes smoked.

Pediatricians and advocates for children are particularly concerned. Kids who are exposed to secondhand smoke can develop asthma and have severe reactions to allergies which are common to tobacco smoke. Many cases of sudden infant death are also attributed to secondhand smoke.

Just as parents and caregivers of small children take measures to use safety gates for staircases or plugs for electrical outlets, experts suggest smokers protect children and adults by eliminating carcinogenic smoke from their homes. This can be accomplished by taking it outside or—better yet—quitting.

"There is no better time to quit smoking. The cost of smoking has increased and there has never been greater availability of treatment. Smokers can call 1-800-QUIT-NOW and receive free coaching and stop-smoking medication to help them quit," said Lezli Redmond with UW-CTRI.

Estimates of exposure were conservatively based on surveys of smokers and Wisconsin students over the past 10 years.

For complete report: <http://www.medsch.wisc.edu/mep/>

###