

# FACT SHEET ON ENVIRONMENTAL TOBACCO SMOKE (ETS)

- It is estimated that 30,000 to 60,000 nonsmokers die each year because of ETS-caused heart disease and three times that many people have nonfatal heart attacks as a result of ETS exposure.
- ETS is now the number three cause of preventable, premature death in the United States, killing as many people as alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents.
- ETS has been classified as a Group A carcinogen by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under their carcinogen assessment guidelines. This classification is reserved for those compounds or mixtures that based on studies in human populations have shown to cause cancer in humans.
- ETS is a human lung carcinogen, responsible for approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths annually in U.S. nonsmokers.
- Nonsmokers exposed to ETS at work were 39% more likely to get lung cancer than nonexposed nonsmoking employees.
- More than 10,000 people die every year from cancers (other than lung cancer) caused by ETS.
- Tobacco smoke contains about 4,000 chemicals; more than 200 are toxins. Among them are arsenic, benzene, carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, hydrogen cyanide, lead, mercury, and vinyl chloride. Approximately 60 substances found in tobacco smoke are known to initiate or promote cancer. **Many of these substances are present in higher concentrations in ETS than in the smoke inhaled directly from a cigarette.**
- ETS has been identified as a cause of serious respiratory illness in children, including bronchitis, pneumonia, asthmatic episodes, new cases of asthma, and sudden infant death syndrome.
- Restaurants are the most frequented public places in America. The average American visits a restaurant 3.5 times a week-every other day. Many of those patrons are children, who are especially sensitive to ETS. ETS interferes with the taste of food and permeates the clothes and hair of customers. **A Smoke-Free Dining Directory listing Bergen County restaurants is available at: <http://www.bergenhealth.org/dept/resources/smokefreelist.pdf>**

*If you are exposed to ETS at work, in multiple dwellings or public areas, and wish to register a complaint, call your municipal building and request to speak to your health officer or board of health secretary.*

#### Sources:

- American Cancer Society
- Group Against Smoking Pollution (GASP), *Smokefree Air Everywhere-Why and How for Decision Makers in Workplaces and Public Places-N.J.*, 13, 14, 17, 94, 95.
- The Journal of the American Medical Society (JAMA) June 1994, April 1995

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