

## Pets and Tobacco Use

Everyone knows secondhand smoke can hurt the health of a human, but did you know that pets can also be hurt by being exposed to smoke? Like young children, pets can also accidentally ingest tobacco products. Knowing the symptoms of nicotine poisoning and dangers caused by exposure to smoke can help keep pets healthier.

### Health Concerns and Fast Facts<sup>1</sup>

- Pets can develop allergies, asthma, and cancer, just like humans, as a result of exposure to smoking.
- Cats are at an increased risk for cancer as a result of exposure to tobacco smoke, and may experience more risk than the humans living in the same home. This is because cats do not typically leave the home, as humans do for extended periods of time. Cats also lick themselves when they groom, which means they may be ingesting thirdhand smoke particles when they groom.
- Breeds of dog with short noses are at increased risk of lung cancer, and long-nosed breeds face an increased risk of nasal cancer. These risks are increased by living with a person who smokes.
- Birds also face health risks, as they are very sensitive to any air pollutant. Birds exposed to secondhand smoke face eye, skin, heart, and fertility problems, as well as pneumonia or lung cancer.
- E-cigarettes can be very dangerous to animals. Pets can ingest the highly-concentrated liquid nicotine in cartridges or the rechargeable batteries, which may cause burns. The number of pet poisoning calls because of e-cigarettes rose dramatically in recent years.<sup>2</sup>
- 28% of pet owners who smoke reported that information about the danger of secondhand smoke to pets would motivate them to quit smoking.<sup>3</sup>
- The only way to completely protect your family (including pets) from secondhand smoke exposure is to quit smoking. Talk to your child's pediatrician for help, or call the national quitline at 1-800-QUIT NOW.

### Symptoms of Nicotine Poisoning<sup>1,4</sup>

These symptoms can occur within 30–60 minutes of nicotine ingestion. If you suspect your pet has ingested nicotine, contact the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at 1-888-426-4435.

- Drooling
- Diarrhea
- Increased heart rate
- Vomiting
- Tremors
- Seizures
- Lethargy
- Auditory and visual disturbances
- Muscle weakness
- Difficulty breathing
- Death

#### References:

1. US Food and Drug Administration. Be Smoke-free and Help Your Pets Live Longer, Healthier Lives. [online]. Available at: <https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/animal-health-literacy/be-smoke-free-and-help-your-pets-live-longer-healthier-lives>. Updated October 19, 2017, Accessed January 28, 2020.
2. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. (2020). E-cigarettes and Pets. [online] Available at: <https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/e-cigarettes-and-pets>. (2020). Accessed January 28, 2020.
3. Milberger SM, Davis RM, Holm AL. Pet owners' attitudes and behaviours related to smoking and second-hand smoke: a pilot study. *Tobacco Control* 2009;18:156-158. Available at: <https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/18/2/156>
4. American Veterinary Medical Association. Stop Smoking – For Your Health and Your Pets' Health. [online]. Available at: <https://www.avma.org/resources/pet-owners/petcare/stop-smoking-your-health-and-your-pets-health>. (2020). Accessed January 28, 2020