

# CHILD SAFETY BLOG

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## Secondhand Smoke Poses Yet More Risks to Children

July 19, 2011 by **Patrick A. Malone**

Because nicotine is possibly the most difficult addiction to kick, because inhaling smoke carries so much destructive potential, you can never try too hard or too often to quit. Now another study shows why smoking around children is a terrible idea.

"Not only are children who are surrounded by secondhand smoke at greater risk for asthma and other health problems," says the [Los Angeles Times](#), "but they may be more likely to have attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder or learning disabilities too."

Researchers at the [Harvard School of Public Health](#) found that children who lived with smokers were 50% more likely to suffer from a learning disability, a behavioral or conduct problem or attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD).

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Although the study was less than scientifically ideal—it was a phone survey of parents—and some variables were not considered, such as whether the mothers smoked during pregnancy, this is not the first study to connect mental health problems and secondhand smoke.

**Embargoed until JULY 18, 2011** Another study published in [Archives of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery](#) concludes that exposure to secondhand smoke is associated with increased risk of hearing loss among adolescents.

Fetuses and young children exposed to secondhand smoke are vulnerable to an array of possible problems, including low birth weight, respiratory and ear infections and behavioral problems. Now evidence suggests that adolescents are at risk of compromised hearing.

In the new study, adolescents who were exposed to secondhand smoke showed higher rates of hearing loss than teens who weren't exposed.

If your teens have been exposed to secondhand smoke, the researchers suggest they be closely monitored for hearing loss, and informed that noise from recreational or occupational endeavors can further impair hearing, even if the kids aren't aware of it.

*Families interested in learning more about our firm's legal services, including legal representation for children who have suffered serious injuries in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia due to medical malpractice, defective products, birth-related trauma or other injuries, may ask questions or send us information about a particular case by phone or email. There is no charge for contacting us regarding your inquiry. An attorney will respond within 24 hours.*

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