

# ENVIRONMENTAL TOBACCO SMOKE (ETS)

## Quick Facts

- Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) (also referred to as “second-hand smoke” or “passive smoking”) contains at least 50 known cancer-causing chemicals, and these chemicals are inhaled and absorbed by non-smokers and smokers.<sup>1</sup>
- Traces of carcinogens and other toxins are found in the blood, urine, saliva and breast milk of non-smokers, even after limited exposure.<sup>2</sup>
- Prolonged ETS exposure can cause lung cancer in non-smoking adults.<sup>3</sup>
- About 347 non-smokers die each year in Canada from ETS-related lung cancer.<sup>3</sup>
- ETS causes ischemic (coronary) heart disease in non-smokers.<sup>4</sup>
- Adult non-smokers living with smokers increase their risk of heart disease by about 25%.<sup>5</sup>
- Estimates in 1997 indicate that 803 Canadians and 56 Albertans died from coronary heart disease as a result of exposure to ETS.<sup>4</sup>
- ETS causes diseases of the lower respiratory tract, respiratory irritation, middle ear disease and worsened asthma in children.<sup>6-10</sup>
- 19% of Alberta children under the age of 12, and 27% of Alberta youth between 12 and 17 years, are regularly exposed to ETS in their homes.<sup>11</sup>
- 78% of Albertans are exposed to second-hand smoke in public places such as restaurants, bars, shopping malls, arenas, bingo halls and bowling alleys.<sup>12</sup>