

School Health Providers' Script for Parents (Who Smoke) Of Elementary School Children With Asthma

✓ **Introductory Statement**

There are many things that trigger asthma and one of them is cigarette smoke. You probably already know that smoking is bad for YOUR health. But it can also make your child's asthma worse, which can cause coughing, wheezing, and difficulty in breathing.

✓ **Educate parents on second hand smoke.**

The tobacco smoke that is breathed out by someone who is smoking and the smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, cigar, or pipe are both called "secondhand smoke". Secondhand smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals many of which can irritate the lungs and can cause cancer.

✓ **Inform parents on how second hand smoke impacts asthmatics and explain how it triggers attacks.**

When your child is exposed to second-hand smoke, it may trigger your child's asthma and make your child more likely to cough, wheeze, and run out of breath.

✓ **Suggest ways for parents to protect their children from second hand smoke and provide resources to help.**

1. Encourage parent to quit smoking

- If you smoke, the best thing you can do for yourself and your children is to quit smoking.
- There are many programs and methods including medication to help you quit.
- Talk to your doctor to help you quit, or call 311, or call HHC smoking cessation programs that provide free or low cost services.
- If you would like, we can call an HHC clinic right now from my telephone and set up an appointment for you [use the HHC Referral Form].
- Here is some information to help you quit smoking [give parent 2 things: "Health Alert: Stopping Smoking" (refer to its back page, which has a list of the HHC programs), and "Smoking and Your Child's Asthma brochure"].

2. If the parent is not yet ready to quit smoking, suggest the following steps

- The best thing you can do for yourself and your children is to quit smoking. However, even if you are not yet ready to quit, there are many things you can start to do right now to prevent your child's asthma from getting worse.
 - Start by not smoking when you hold, play with, bathe, feed or ride in the car with your child. When you can do that, then
 - Smoke only in one room that is off limits to your child and never smoke in the room where your child sleeps, then
 - Only smoke outside of your home, then
 - Only smoke when you are away from your home and your child.
 - Now, stop smoking completely!

3. Protect your child from others who smoke

- If there are other people who smoke around your child, help them understand the dangers of smoking and encourage them to quit too. If they are also not ready to quit, protect your child by insisting that they not smoke around your child or in your home.
- Avoid restaurants and public places that permit smoking.

✓ Follow up

We really want to help you improve your child's asthma symptoms. Let's set up another time to talk again next month to see how things are going. What day is good for you to come in again?