

Healthy Homes: Thirdhand Smoke Pollution



THIRDHAND
SMOKEResource Center

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Thirdhandsmoke.org

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SDSU Healthy Homes

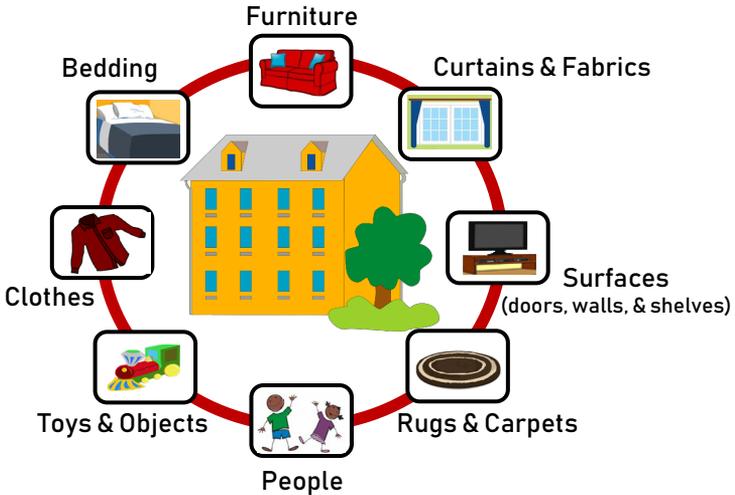
What is Thirdhand Smoke?

Thirdhand smoke is the **leftover tobacco residue** that remains in *dust*, the *air*, or on *surfaces* after a cigarette, cigar, or tobacco pipe has been put out.

Although thirdhand smoke residue **can't always be seen or smelled**, it can also appear as an unpleasant odor or a yellow-brown stain on walls.

Where Can Thirdhand Smoke be Found in Homes?

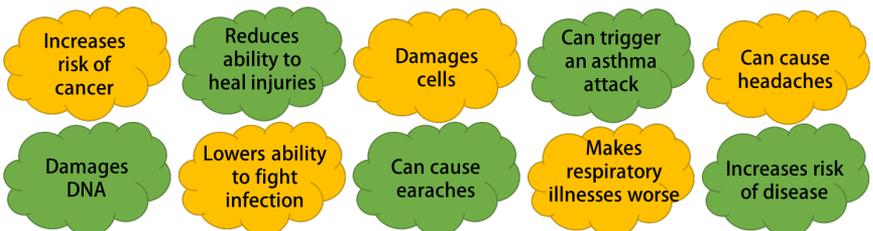
Thirdhand smoke is most commonly found in **dust**, but it can be detected in many places in a home.



Why is Thirdhand Smoke Exposure Bad for Your Health?

Thirdhand smoke exposure occurs through **breathing**, being **absorbed into the skin**, and by **entering the mouth**.

Although people are affected differently depending on their health status, age, and amount of exposure, chemicals in thirdhand smoke have been linked to the following:



Results from the Home Before & After Cleaning

Some participants had their homes cleaned to remove thirdhand smoke pollution. The color wheels below display the amount of thirdhand smoke residue that was in homes **before** and **after** cleaning.

- *None to Little* Thirdhand Smoke
- *Low* Thirdhand Smoke
- *Moderate* Thirdhand Smoke
- *High* Thirdhand Smoke

The amount of thirdhand smoke **in the dust in homes:**



Before Cleaning



After Cleaning

The amount of thirdhand smoke **on the surfaces in homes:**



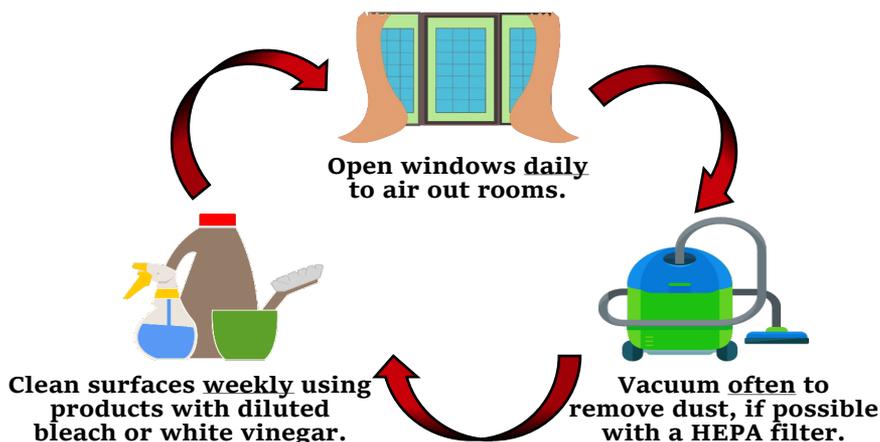
Before Cleaning



After Cleaning

- Thirdhand smoke residue was collected from **surface wipes** and **dust samples**.
- We determined overall thirdhand smoke residue levels through analyzing the amount of **nicotine** and four **tobacco-specific nitrosamines**.
- Although completely removing thirdhand smoke residue is a long-term task, our cleaning method **reduced** the amount of pollution in homes overall.
- **Maintain** lower thirdhand smoke residue levels through the cleaning procedures **outlined on the back!**

How to Reduce Exposure to Thirdhand Smoke in Your Home



Unfortunately, it is difficult to remove thirdhand smoke from a home. But you can help keep exposure low through **regular cleaning** in the following ways:

- Open windows to **air out rooms** as frequently as possible.
 - **Reduce dust** by vacuuming often. Use a vacuum with a **HEPA filter**—be sure to replace the filter regularly. *(These filters are easy to find and typically labeled.)*
 - Wipe the walls, surfaces, and floors with a diluted **bleach OR white vinegar-based solution**. *(Follow labeled instructions for diluting bleach; use one part vinegar to three parts water.)*
 - **Wash** ALL household fabrics, including toys, clothes, curtains, blankets, pillows, and cushion covers.
 - Don't let anyone use tobacco products in or around your home.
 - **Discard or replace items** that you know have a lot of tobacco smoke residue that you can't wash.
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