How are you exposed to thirdhand smoke?

**Through touching:**

People can be exposed to thirdhand smoke when their skin comes in contact with a surface on which thirdhand smoke has collected. Such surfaces could be the steering wheel of a car, a blanket, a table, a toy, or a chair. From a polluted surface, thirdhand smoke chemicals can adhere to your skin, enter your blood stream, and circulate through your body where it may harm your DNA, immune system, or affect your cardio-vascular system. If you think you’ve touched surfaces that have thirdhand smoke pollution, wash your hands immediately.

**Through breathing:**

It is possible to breathe in thirdhand smoke chemicals and particles that are in the air. Thirdhand smoke vapors can be released into the air from clothes, furniture, carpets, walls, or pillows. When this happens, we can sometimes smell stale tobacco smoke, but not always. When you smell thirdhand smoke, it is not just a bad odor, it is a mixture of toxic chemicals that can enter your body through your lungs.

**Through entering the mouth:**

People can swallow thirdhand smoke when they put fingers or objects (e.g., toys, cups, utensils) in their mouths that have been polluted with thirdhand smoke. Young children are at highest risk of ingesting thirdhand smoke because they put just about anything into their mouths, particularly when they are teething.

**Sources**


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