Do cigars cause thirdhand smoke?

The Short Answer

Thirdhand smoke is the chemicals left behind when someone smokes tobacco. Thirdhand smoke is unhealthy for people and pets. It can stick around for a long time in homes and cars. It gets into your body if you inhale, swallow, or touch the chemicals. Getting rid of it is really hard and can cost a lot of money.

Cigar smoke can absorb into surfaces and household objects, becoming thirdhand smoke. This thirdhand smoke residue from cigars contains similar harmful chemicals to thirdhand smoke residue from cigarettes.

The Long Answer

Thirdhand smoke is the chemical residue from tobacco smoke. It is also called “tobacco smoke residue” or “stale tobacco smoke.” The chemicals in thirdhand smoke are toxic to humans, especially children. Thirdhand smoke can linger for years in dust and on household surfaces. It can also become embedded in carpets, furniture, clothes, and building materials. It is difficult and expensive to remove.

Cigars consist of a rolled bundle of dried tobacco leaves (the filler), the binder leaf holding the filler together, and the wrapper leaf. One cigar can contain over 15 grams of tobacco, which is 15 times more than the amount of one cigarette. Cigar tobacco has similar chemicals as cigarette tobacco but in different proportions. Cigars have more nitrogen compounds, ammonia, and tar than cigarettes. These compounds produce cancer-causing substances called tobacco-specific nitrosamines.

Cigars make large quantities of secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke is what creates toxic thirdhand smoke. Like thirdhand smoke from cigarettes, thirdhand smoke from cigars can become embedded in surfaces, clothes, carpets, furniture, and walls. The thirdhand smoke residue can remain on surfaces and in dust for years after the smoking stops. Further, exposure to thirdhand smoke from cigars is harmful to one’s health.

Do you have more questions about the toxic legacy of tobacco smoke, how it affects human health, and what we can do about it? Learn more here.

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Sources:

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