

# Disparities in secondhand smoke exposure among adult non-smokers

## Adult Tobacco Survey 2014

### Background

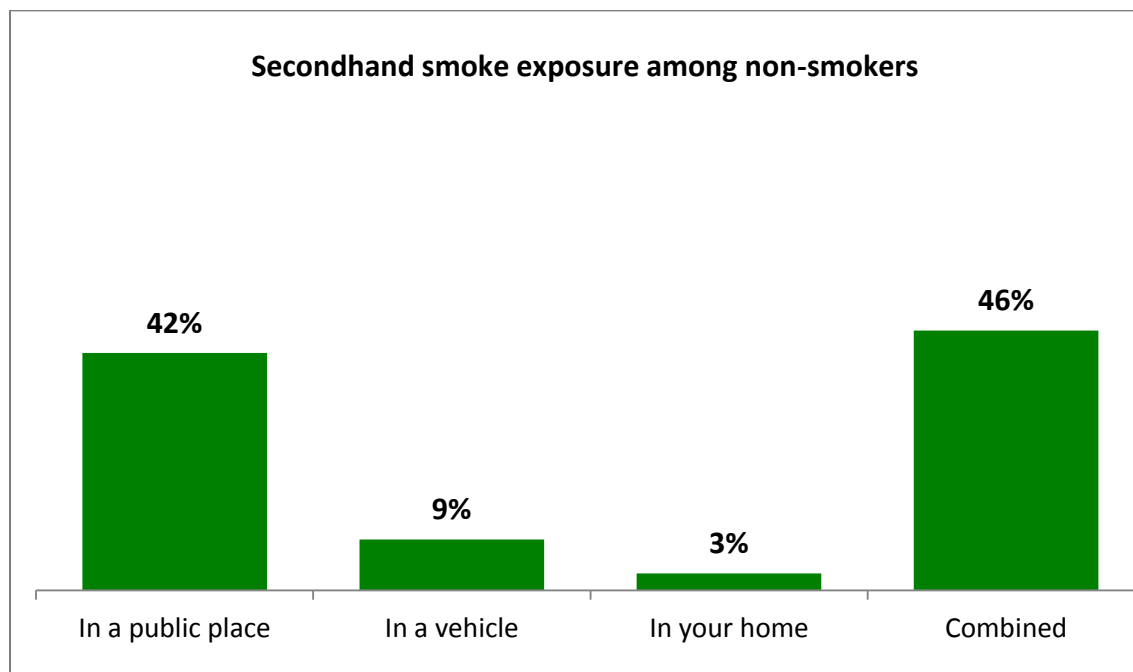
Secondhand smoke is the smoke given off by a burning tobacco product and the smoke exhaled by a smoker. People can be exposed to secondhand smoke in homes, cars, the workplace, and public places. In the United States, the source of most secondhand smoke is from cigarettes, followed by pipes, cigars, and other tobacco products<sup>i</sup>. During 2011–2012, an estimated 58 million non-smokers in the United States breathed other peoples' tobacco smoke<sup>ii</sup>.

Each year in the US, more than 41,000 non-smoking adults die from diseases caused by exposure to secondhand smoke (34,000 from coronary heart disease and 7,300 from lung cancer). Non-smokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work increase their lung cancer risk by 20–30%<sup>ii</sup>. Secondhand smoke can also increase the risk of stroke and preliminary research suggests that it may increase the risk of breast cancer, nasal sinus cavity cancer and hardening of the arteries<sup>i, iii</sup>. Secondhand smoke-attributable economic costs in the United States have been estimated to be \$5.6 billion for lost productivity<sup>iii</sup>.

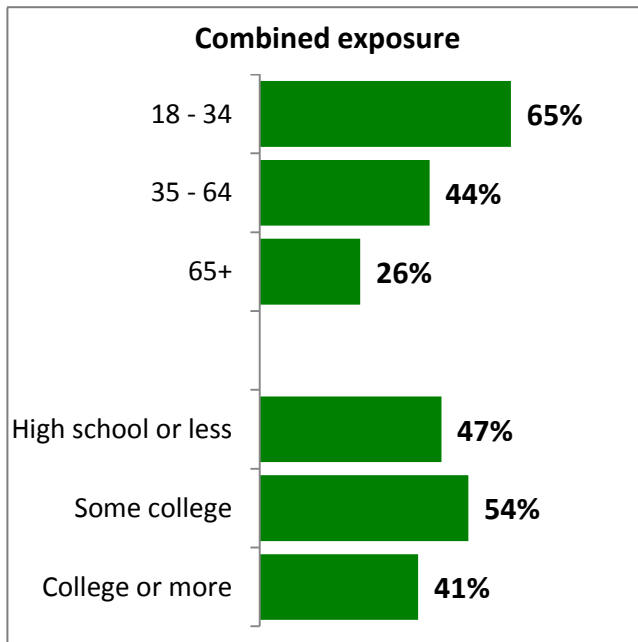
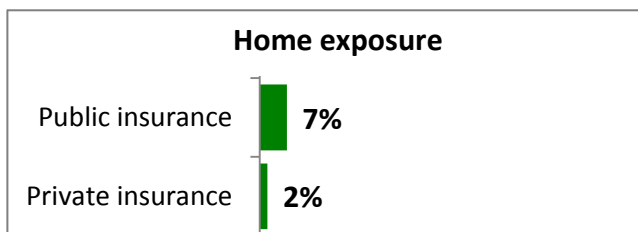
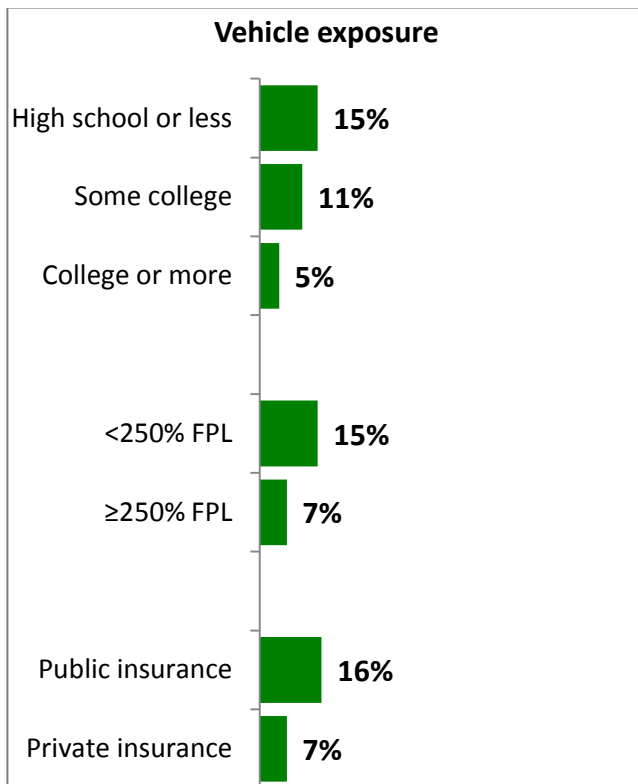
The following data summarize exposure to secondhand smoke among Vermont non-smokers. Of particular interest are the differences in exposure to secondhand smoke among demographic groups which, in general, shows higher exposure among young adults, those with less education, those that have a household income less than 250% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and those with publicly funded health insurance.<sup>5</sup> Differences within demographic groups are only presented if they were statistically significant.

### Secondhand smoke exposure in Vermont

In 2014, exposure to secondhand smoke among non-smokers was most likely to occur in a public space while exposure in a vehicle or the home was less likely. Over two in five Vermont non-smokers (42%) reported public exposure. About one in ten (9%) reported being in a car with someone who was smoking tobacco and 3% reported that someone smoked tobacco in their home. A combined measure of all three locations indicated that 46% of non-smokers were exposed to secondhand smoke in at least one of those locations.



## Exposure to secondhand smoke among non-smokers, by demographic groups



### Vehicle

Exposure to secondhand smoke in a vehicle among non-smokers varied by several demographic factors. Non-smokers who completed a college education or more were significantly less likely to report exposure compared to non-smokers who had a high school education or less (5% vs. 15%).

Non-smokers who have a household income that is less than 250% FPL were significantly more likely to report secondhand smoke in a vehicle compared to those who have a household income that is 250% FPL or more (15% vs. 7%). Similarly, non-smokers with publicly funded health insurance<sup>§</sup> were significantly more likely to report exposure in a vehicle as compared to those with privately funded health insurance<sup>§</sup> (16% vs. 7%).

### Home

Exposure to secondhand smoke in the home among non-smokers significantly varied by insurance status. Non-smokers with publicly funded health insurance<sup>§</sup> were more likely to report exposure than non-smokers with privately funded health insurance<sup>§</sup> (7% vs. 2%).

### Combined

Non-smoker exposure to secondhand smoke in public, a vehicle or the home varied by age and education. Young adults (18 – 34) were most likely to have been exposed (65%) followed by 35 – 64 year olds (44%) and those 65 and older (26%). These results were similar to what was observed for exposure in a public place (data not shown). All age groups were statistically different.

Non-smokers with some college education were more likely to have been exposed than those with a college education or more (54% vs. 41%).

<sup>§</sup>Publicly funded health insurance: Medicaid, Medicare, Ladies First or Green Mountain Care. Privately funded health insurance: VA/Tricare, Blue Cross Blue Shield, MVP, Cigna, or Other private insurance. Insurance categories were not mutually exclusive.

## Summary

Nearly half of non-smokers in Vermont have been exposed to secondhand smoke in car, home or public place. Exposure occurs more frequently among those ages 18-25, with less education and lower income. The Vermont Tobacco Control Program provides smoking cessation resources to all Vermonters who are tobacco users age 13 and above, and also guidance on how to establish tobacco-free campuses, workplaces, daycare and home settings. Establishing smoke-free zones in homes is a method for reducing exposure to children, pets and other household members<sup>iv</sup>.

Contact the [Tobacco Control Program Vermont Department of Health](mailto:tobaccovt@vermont.gov), [tobaccovt@vermont.gov](mailto:tobaccovt@vermont.gov) Tel: 802-863-7330 or 800-331-5622 for more information and assistance.

For more information:

- Surgeon General Reports  
<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/full-report.pdf>  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44324/pdf/TOC.pdf>
- National Cancer Institute  
<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/causes-prevention/risk/tobacco/second-hand-smoke-fact-sheet#r8>
- Center for Disease Control  
<http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/resources/data/cigarette-smoking-in-united-states.html>
- Health Vermonters 2020  
<http://www.healthvermont.gov/hv2020/>

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<sup>i</sup> National Cancer Institute <http://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/tobacco/second-hand-smoke-fact-sheet#r8>

<sup>ii</sup> Centers for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/resources/data/cigarette-smoking-in-united-states.html>

<sup>iii</sup> Surgeon General Report <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/full-report.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Environmental Protection Agency <http://www.epa.gov/>