

Cigarette Smoking Should Only Be Allowed In Private

I really wish there would be a law to prevent smoking in public. Public smoking is a nuisance. It is dangerous and a serious health hazard. My definition of “public” in this article would be any place or situation where there is one or more persons in the presence of a smoker. This can be in a public building, private home, or even outdoor where the smoker has to be no less than 1000 feet away from a single person or group. This is to ensure that no second-hand smoke of any kind can reach the non-smoker.

Why is this such a serious matter for me? Some research indicates that second-hand smoking is more dangerous to the non-smoker than the smoker. This is important to me because I have personally seen the effect of how an “insignificant” amount of cigarette smoke causes serious medical problems to someone for months. The American Cancer Society states: “Second-hand smoke causes lung cancer in adults who have never smoked. Non-smokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or at work increase their risk of developing lung cancer by 20–30%.”

What disturbs me a lot as a nonsmoker is I am still forced to endure the smoking of individuals while walking down the streets, outside our airports, outside food stores, banks, etc. Ironically, many buildings prohibit smoking, but the smokers will gather outside the entrances where people use to enter the buildings. These smokers cause a concentration of poisonous smoke that can cause serious medical and emotional problems for the non-smokers. There are many non-smokers who cannot inhale the smallest amount of cigarette smoke because it will activate asthma or serious sinus problems that can even lead to hospitalization. Let me remind the reader that when I use the word “cigarette” in this article, I am also including “cigars.” A cigar is just a bigger, dangerous weapon.

It is so ironical that it is illegal for people carry guns and furthermore to pull them out of their safe places and start randomly shooting. However, cigarette smokers feel it’s a right to spew their lethal arsenal around them ignoring the potential danger to those nearby. You can see these smokers blowing out the white streams of smoke in the air like a human stack chimney. “Ah! It’s sophisticate,” they say. Well, it can lead to a “sophisticated” death of themselves and those around them.

DEADLY RESULTS

The American Cancer Society further explains the effect of secondhand smoke or what they call “sidestream” smoke. The Society defines sidestream smoke this way: It is “smoke from the lighted end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar, or tobacco burning in a hookah. This type of smoke has higher concentrations of cancer-causing agents (carcinogens) and is more toxic than mainstream smoke (the smoke exhaled by a smoker). It also has smaller particles than mainstream smoke. These smaller particles make their way into the lungs and the body’s cells more easily. . . . When non-smokers are exposed to secondhand smoke (SHS), it’s called involuntary smoking or passive smoking. Non-smokers who breathe in SHS take in nicotine and toxic chemicals the same way smokers do. The more SHS you breathe, the higher the levels of these harmful chemicals in your body.”

Several research organizations have concluded that secondhand smoke causes lung cancer and other diseases to the non-smoker. “There’s also some evidence suggesting it might be linked in adults to cancers of the larynx (voice box), pharynx (throat), nasal sinuses, brain, bladder, rectum, stomach, breast.” The research indicates that children are also impacted by secondhand smoke. The results include lymphoma, leukemia, liver cancer, brain tumors. Children whose caregivers smoke are more likely suffer from “lung infections (like bronchitis and pneumonia), cough, wheeze, and have shortness of breath and more ear infections.” We also know that secondhand smoke can result in sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Research also indicates that even E-cigarettes can be problematic to non-smokers. The Society for the Study of Addiction indicates: “E-cigarette vapor exposes people sharing a room with an e-cigarette user to contaminants, including nicotine, particulates and hydrocarbons.”

I wish I had Bahamians statistics on secondhand smoking. Hence, I will resort to our neighbors next door, the United States of America (USA). USA research indicates that about 53,000 people die from secondhand smoke every year. When we breathe secondhand smoke, we are breathing the same 4,000 chemicals a cigarette smoker breathes. Fifty-one of those chemicals cause cancer. I think it is easy to make a correlation with the Bahamian society. Many Bahamians smoke every day. I see young and old men and women with cigarettes in their mouths.

GUILTY MARIJUANA

Let me emphasize here that marijuana smoking is not excluded from my concerns. It is just as guilty. The American Lung Association states: "Smoke is harmful to lung health. Whether from burning wood, tobacco or marijuana, toxins and carcinogens are released from the combustion of materials. Smoke from marijuana combustion has been shown to contain many of the same toxins, irritants and carcinogens as tobacco smoke. . .

Research shows that smoking marijuana causes chronic bronchitis and marijuana smoke has been shown to injure the cell linings of the large airways, which could explain why smoking marijuana leads to symptoms such as chronic cough, phlegm production, wheezing and acute bronchitis." There are many marijuana smokers in our country. I've noticed that the smoke stream from a marijuana cigarette impacts the non-smoker the same as the smoke stream from tobacco cigarettes. Thus, the intent of this article is to impact the Government to make it illegal for any kind of smoking in public.

SMOKING ROOM

It is my view that persons who live in neighborhoods should be required have a smoking room in the home that is designed to dissipate the smoke and cannot impact other residents in the home. This is important because standing outside in the yard to smoke is still lethal. The smoke stream travels hundreds of feet and can still affect non-smokers. As stated earlier, I have witnessed persons getting seriously sick after inadvertently inhaling such stream of cigarette smoke hundreds of feet away.

Smokers, I appeal to you to give the Bahamian society one of the best Christmas gifts—stop smoking in public—wherever there is one or more non-smoker of any age within 1000 feet of the smoker.

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