

# Second-hand Smoke in the Home

Second-hand smoke is a mix of the smoke from the burning end of a cigarette (sidestream smoke), plus the smoke blown into the air by the person smoking (mainstream smoke). Second-hand smoke contains more than 4000 chemicals, including 50 that are known to cause cancer. Many of the chemicals in second-hand smoke are present in higher concentrations in sidestream smoke than in mainstream smoke.

Children are particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of second-hand smoke, with an increased risk of glue ear, respiratory illnesses, asthma, and reduced lung growth<sup>1</sup>. Reducing children's exposure to second-hand smoke is a focus for tobacco control.

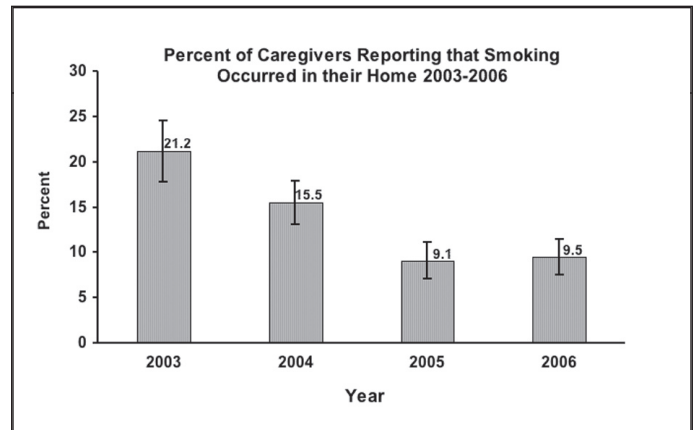
The *Smokefree Homes* campaign, a mass media campaign about the danger of second-hand smoke in the home, was launched by the Health Sponsorship Council (HSC) in April 2004<sup>2</sup>. The goal of the campaign was to reduce children's exposure to second-hand smoke in the home by:

- Increasing parents\* and caregivers' motivation and confidence in their ability to make their homes smokefree.
- Increasing parents and caregivers' knowledge of strategies to make their homes smokefree.

## Exposure to Second-hand Smoke

Results from population surveys the HSC conducted between 2003 and 2006 indicate that the number of children exposed to second-hand smoke has gone down.

- In 2006, 9.5% of caregivers reported that a person had smoked around them inside their home within the past week.
- This figure has more than halved since 2003, when 21.2% of caregivers reported being exposed to second-hand smoke in the home.
- The reduction in caregiver exposure to second-hand smoke is consistent with the decrease for the total adult population, from 21.6% to 11.5%.



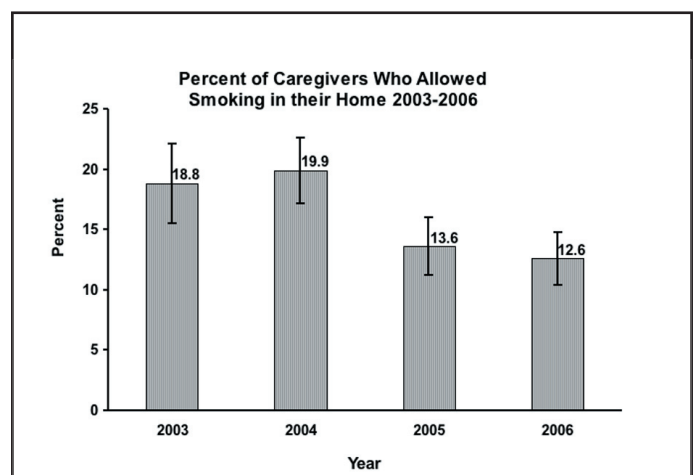
The most marked decrease in caregiver exposure to second-hand smoke occurred between 2004 and 2005 after the launch of the *Smokefree Homes* campaign. There was also a decrease in exposure between 2003 and 2004, which may have been due to public discussions about the dangers of second-hand smoke and the upcoming changes to the Smoke-free Environments Act to introduce smokefree bars, clubs and restaurants.

## Smoking Inside the Home

Results also indicate that there are now more children who live in homes where smoking is not allowed.

- In 2006, 12.6% of caregivers said that smoking was allowed inside their home.
- This figure has decreased by one-third since 2003, when 18.8% of caregivers said that smoking was allowed inside their home.

That fewer caregivers allow smoking inside their home is consistent with the decrease for the total adult population, from 23% to 18%. The apparent decrease in the number of homes where smoking was allowed was larger for caregivers than for the total adult population.



### Interpreting the Charts:

- Between 2004 and 2006, the percentage of caregivers exposed to second-hand smoke dropped significantly; and in the same period, the percentage of caregivers who allowed smoking in their home also dropped significantly.
- There were no statistically significant differences between figures from 2005 and 2006. This means that the differences were not large enough to suggest noticeable changes in the population.
- The number of people interviewed for each survey were: 2003 – 544 caregivers, 2004 – 846 caregivers, 2005 – 787 caregivers, and 2006 – 836 caregivers.

## What Have We Learned?

- The launch of the *Smokefree Homes* campaign in 2004 and the implementation of provisions in the Smoke-free Environments Amendment Act (2003) appear to have been significant triggers to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke.
- Following the launch of the *Smokefree Homes* campaign in April 2004, there was a marked decrease in the percentage of caregivers who reported being exposed to second-hand smoke inside the home. This positive downward trend was matched by a decrease in the percentage of caregivers who said that smoking was allowed inside their home. These changes were maintained into 2006.
- The percentage of New Zealanders exposed to second-hand smoke in home settings decreased between 2003 and 2006. In the same period, workers' exposure to second-hand smoke in indoor work settings decreased at about the same rate, from 21.3% to 8.4%<sup>3</sup>. The reduction in workplace exposure coincided with the introduction of the Smoke-free Environments Amendment Act (2003) which extended protection for workers from second-hand smoke exposure in indoor work settings.
- In other jurisdictions, laws to ban smoking in the workplace have been associated with increases in smoking bans in homes. Findings from a study in California showed that following workplace smoking bans, around 1 in 2 smokers reported they had a smoking ban in their home, up from only 1 in 5 smokers prior to the workplace smoking ban<sup>4</sup>.

### About the Surveys

The HSC Monitor (2003-2006) is a telephone survey of more than 2,000 adults. Survey data were adjusted to be representative of the New Zealand adult population using the 2001 Census for age, ethnicity (Maori/non-Maori), and smoking status (smokes/does not smoke).

\* Across the survey years, "parent" and "caregiver" were defined as an adult assumed to have parental or caregiver responsibility for at least one child under the age of 14 who lived in the same household.

### References

1. Cancer Society National Office (New Zealand) (2004). *Second-hand smoke hazards*. An information sheet posted on [www.cancernz.org.nz/Uploads/IS\\_TC\\_shandhaz.pdf](http://www.cancernz.org.nz/Uploads/IS_TC_shandhaz.pdf)
2. The Ministry of Health contracted the HSC and The Quit Group to develop and deliver the *Smokefree Homes* campaign. For information on the *Smokefree Homes* media campaign, see [www.smokefreehomes.org.nz](http://www.smokefreehomes.org.nz)
3. Waa, A., & McGough, S. (2006). *Reducing exposure to second-hand smoke: Changes associated with the implementation of the amended New Zealand Smoke-free Environments Act 1990: 2003-2006*. Wellington: HSC Research & Evaluation Unit
4. California Department of Health Services (2002). *California Tobacco Control Update*. California: California Department of Health Services