

Banning workplace smoking not enough

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Many workplaces ban smoking to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke and to encourage employees to quit smoking. However, the presence of another smoker at home may sabotage employers' efforts to get workers to quit, finds a new study in the *American Journal of Health Promotion*.

The finding is from a study of 627 current or former [smokers](#) surveyed as part of the National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States. Researchers asked respondents whether they worked with anyone who smoked in their immediate work area or lived with a smoker.

Having both the presence of smokers in the workplace and in the home significantly increased the odds that a respondent was also a current

smoker. Working with a smoker was linked to almost three times greater odds of smoking, whereas living with a smoker was linked to more than six-fold greater odds of smoking. For those people living with a smoker, their smoking was unrelated to whether or not their work colleagues smoked.

"Our findings suggest that worksite smoking interventions could be made more effective if they included a focus on educating workers' families about the health effects of smoking and the benefits of home [smoking bans](#)," said lead author Carole K. Holahan, Ph.D., professor of kinesiology and health education at the University of Texas, Austin.

"De-normalizing smoking in any environment is likely to make it easier to be successful at quitting," said Laurent Huber, MS, executive director of Action on Smoking and Health in Washington, DC. "This study demonstrates how important it is to ban smoking in all workplaces and public spaces. People have a right to their [health](#), and should not have to choose between a job and being able to breathe clean air."

Regulations against smoking in apartment buildings are becoming more widespread and are effective, Huber said. "Many rental and summer rental properties are saying, 'No smoking allowed.'" Such smoking bans are analogous to regulations on excessive noise, she said.

Studies have shown that smoking bans in apartments are welcomed by residents but are resisted by landlords, Holahan noted. Landlords may need to be educated about the benefits of smoking bans in apartments.

Bans on [smoking](#) in the workplace are popular among employees, even among those who smoke, Huber added. "It is shameful that so many people are still exposed to secondhand smoke at work."

More information: Social influences on smoking in American

workers: The role of the presence of smokers in the workplace and in the home, *Am J Health Promotion*, 2013; 28: 105-107.

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