

Smoking bans help kids breathe easier

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(HealthDay)—Smoking bans help protect the health of children's lungs, a new analysis shows.

The researchers reviewed 41 studies from North America, Europe and China, and found that anti-smoking measures were linked to a more than 18 percent decrease in childhood chest infections requiring hospital care, a nearly 10 percent decline in severe asthma attacks among children, and about a 4 percent drop in preterm births. But the study could not prove that the anti-smoking measures caused these decreases.

"Our study demonstrates that children's [health](#) benefits substantially from smoke-free laws and raising tobacco prices," said researcher Dr. Jasper Been, from the Erasmus Medical Center in the Netherlands. "To protect the health of some of the most vulnerable members of society, implementation of such [tobacco control policies](#) should be accelerated across the globe."

The studies included data from more than 57 million births and 2.7 million hospital admissions. The findings were published Sept. 5 in *The Lancet Public Health*.

Aziz Sheikh is director of the University of Edinburgh's Usher Institute and the Asthma UK Center for Applied Research. "Our evaluation provides compelling evidence of the considerable impact of tobacco control policies on child health," he said in a journal news release.

"This work should spur governments to take action to implement tried and tested policies —strongly advocated by the World Health Organization—to reduce [secondhand smoke exposure](#) and improve a range of important health outcomes in infants and children," Sheikh added.

Tobacco-related health problems cost about \$1.4 trillion worldwide each year.

More information: The American Academy of

Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery has more on [secondhand smoke and children](#).

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