

# Parenting Matters

Quarterly Newsletter

January 2009

For Colorado Parents

## EFFECTS OF SECONDHAND SMOKE



While most parents and guardians realize that breathing secondhand smoke is unhealthy for children, many don't fully understand just how dangerous it is and how many health problems it can cause. Containing more than 4,000 chemicals—including at least 60 that are known to cause cancer—secondhand smoke is very harmful to children.

As a parent, the best step you can take to protect your children from secondhand smoke is to make sure no one ever smokes inside your home, your car, or any where else your children may be. The One Step you (or anyone else in your home who smokes) can take is to always step outside before lighting up, and be sure to close the doors and windows so that smoke doesn't migrate back into the house or vehicle.

But what if others in your home who smoke don't like the idea of stepping outside? First, talk to them about the harmful effects secondhand smoke has on your child's health and let them know you're concerned. Breathing secondhand smoke increases your child's risk of illnesses including ear infections, bronchitis and pneumonia, just to name a few. Second, they need to understand that smoking in another room, opening a window, turning on a fan, using an air filter, or covering up the smell with an air freshener are ineffective methods for protecting children from the poisons in secondhand smoke. The only way to protect children is to always step outside to smoke.

As you ask the relatives and friends in your home to smoke outside, be polite, but also be firm. After all, secondhand smoke puts the health of your child in danger. It may also prove helpful to provide other smokers in the home with ideas that will help make smoking outside more convenient. You could place all ashtrays in a special smoking area outside, have gum and snacks on hand to reduce cravings at those times when stepping outside may not be possible, and offer to go for a walk with them while they smoke.

If a friend or family member is ready to quit smoking, suggest these two great (and free) services to help them succeed: Colorado QuitLine and Colorado QuitNet. These services offer tools such as free coaching to quit and the nicotine patch. Help for quitting through the QuitLine is available at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), and through the QuitNet, 24/7, on the Internet at [www.coquitline.org](http://www.coquitline.org). Until they are ready to take the big step to quit, ask them to take the One Step outside to protect others from secondhand smoke.

**Source:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's State Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership

**For more information:** [www.raisesmokefreekids.com](http://www.raisesmokefreekids.com),  
or [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov), or  
[www.cdc.gov/tobacco](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco).

**PARENTING MATTERS, PREVENTION WORKS**

## Ten Tips to Keep Your Child Safe: Car Seat Tips

1. Infants should ride in rear-facing child safety seats in the back seat until at least age 1 and at least 20 pounds.
2. If under age 1, but more than 20 pounds, infants should ride in a child safety seat approved for heavier babies and remain rear-facing until at least age 1.
3. Never place a rear-facing infant seat in front of a passenger air bag.
4. Once children outgrow their rear-facing child safety seats (typically over age 1 and heavier than 20 pounds) they should ride in a forward-facing child safety seat until they reach the upper weight (usually 40 pounds) or height limits of the seat.
5. Once children outgrow forward-facing child safety seats, they should ride in the back seat in booster seats until they are at least 8 years old, unless they are 4 feet 9 inches tall, at which point they should fit properly in a seat belt.
6. After outgrowing a booster seat, children under age 13 should always use a seat belt and ride in the back seat.
7. Old/used child safety seats should not be used unless you are certain they have never been in a crash and you have all the parts (including instructions). Seats that are 6 years old or older should be discarded and never used. Visit: [http://www.seatcheck.org/tips\\_seat\\_recall\\_list.html](http://www.seatcheck.org/tips_seat_recall_list.html) to check if your child safety seat has been recalled.
8. Always read both the vehicle owner's manual and the instructions that come with the child safety seat.
9. It is important to remember that the "best" child safety seat is the one that correctly fits the child, the vehicle, and is used correctly every time.
10. Get your child's safety seat checked!



Source: [http://www.seatcheck.org/tips\\_safety\\_tips.html](http://www.seatcheck.org/tips_safety_tips.html)

### GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN ONLINE SUPPORT

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/grg/>

The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Online Support website offers grandparents and kinship providers' information, resources, and online support about raising grandchildren.

The website features the following topics:  
Financial/Benefits, Health Concerns, Legal Issues,  
Parenting, and more!!!



*Coming January 2009*  
*A service of Colorado State University Extension*

### What are the most common child safety seat installation mistakes?

- Not using the right child safety seat for a child's size and age;
- Not placing the child safety seat in the correct direction;
- Incorrect installation of the child safety seat in relation to the vehicle's air bags;
- Incorrect installation and tightness of the child safety seat to the vehicle seat;
- Not securing/tightening the child safety seat's harness and crotch straps;
- Improper use of locking clips for certain vehicle safety belts;
- Not making sure the vehicle's seat belts fit properly across the child when using a booster seat; and
- Using a defective or broken child safety seat.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

Available in Spanish by request

## Parenting Matters

Published quarterly by Partners in Parenting  
**Colorado State University**  
**Cooperative Extension**  
Project Director  
Christine Cerbana  
**Editor: Bridget S. Ohl**  
Questions or comments?  
Call us at (800) 457-2736

### Women May Struggle with Challenge of a Newborn

Many new mothers in the United States struggle with chronic emotional and physical problems, often with little or no support from their husbands or partners, all the while trying to meet the needs of their newborns, and in some cases the pressure to return to work, a new report finds.

The report, called *New Mothers Speak Out, National Survey Results Highlight Women's Postpartum Experiences*, surveyed 903 new mothers, ages 18 to 45, who gave birth in 2005. Among the findings:

- After six months, 43 percent of the women still felt stressed
- 40 percent reported problems controlling their weight
- 34 percent had trouble sleeping
- 26 percent had no sexual desire
- 24 percent suffered from chronic backaches.

What's more, many women didn't feel they got the support they needed from their spouse or partner, with 73 percent saying they provided more of the child care than their husband or partner. More than one-third of the working women were back on the job six weeks after giving birth and 84 percent were back working after 12 weeks of maternity leave. Almost half of the women -48 percent- said they hadn't remained at home as long as they wished.



Once the women returned to work, many challenges still remained. Problems making child-care arrangements affected 50 percent of the new mothers; breast-feeding issues affected 37 percent; and 29 percent said they experienced lack of support in the workplace. Changes in society have left new mothers more isolated. "Most women don't exist within extended families and need other forms of support, because there is not an extended family that can pick up the extra responsibility", says Dr. Ruta Nonacs, staff psychiatrist with Massachusetts General Hospital. Longer maternity leaves and more flexible return-to-work policies would be one way of helping new mothers, and would result in lower levels of stress, according to Nonacs.

All of this creates high levels of stress and sets people up for disappointment and feelings of inadequacy. Nonacs advises: "Get all the support you can muster—one needs a lot of support, and one also needs to take care of oneself."

(Edited to fit this publication; HealthDay News 2008 [www.everdayhealth.com](http://www.everdayhealth.com))

### HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH STRESS

Children are capable of learning and utilizing coping skills that will help them through difficult situations. Adults frequently become so preoccupied they forget that tough times have an emotional as well as a financial impact on their children. Children depend on their parents for emotional security. When parents are tense, upset, and inattentive, it disrupts the flow of normal activities.

Losing a job or income affects all members of the family. It can mean there is less money to spend, so decisions must be made on how to spend what is there. It may mean other family members must find jobs. It may also reduce the time available for family members to spend together.

Unemployment can mean a parent is home more, which might call for adjusting schedules and space. It may involve a move for the family.

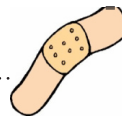
Whatever changes tough times bring, all family members feel the impact. Communicating these feelings and concerns, as a family, is important. Parents should encourage verbal expressions of anger and talk with children.

- Talk with children about their feelings and concerns.
- Allow children to have their feelings and listen to them.
- Let children know that you are afraid or nervous sometimes too.
- Be honest with children about what is going on.
- Teach children relaxation exercises to use when they feel tense.
- Love, hug, and be direct with children.
- Help children use their imagination to think positively.
- Praise children for accomplishments and efforts.

Source: CSU Extension and  
[www.extension.org](http://www.extension.org)

# When a Child Bites

**REASON.....SOLUTION.....**



**Teething**

When gums are sore and swollen, biting can feel good.

Offer the child a teething biscuit, firm rubber teething ring, or a frozen Bagel

**Attention-Seeking**

Young children may try a variety of ways to gain attention, including biting.

Give the child attention when he is not biting, so that he is less likely to bite to gain attention.

**Power/ Aggression**

When children experience a need for power and control, they may bite other children, and the reaction only reinforces the biter's behavior

Share acceptable ways to interact with others. Encourage positive social behavior like sharing or waiting turns.

**Territorial Defense**

A child may bite when he feels threatened. He may be trying to protect his play space, toys, and himself from overwhelming surroundings.

Comfort the child and let him know that he is safe. Make sure that the area is not too crowded and there is ample space and toys.

**Frustration/ Stess**

Unable to express her intense feelings with words, biting may occur. A move, divorce, or new sibling can cause feelings of frustration and stress.

Be aware of signs that show rising frustration. Teach her ways to show her feelings appropriately and praise her when she communicates properly.

**NEVER ENCOURAGE A CHILD TO BITE BACK AND NEVER BITE A CHILD TO SHOW THAT IT HURTS! YOUR MESSAGE SHOULD ALWAYS BE CLEAR AND SIMPLE: BITING IS NEVER ACCEPTABLE FOR ANYONE**



Resource: Children's Home Society of California. Rev. 2005.

For more information:  
The American Academy of Pediatrics  
[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

## PARENTING MATTERS, PREVENTION WORKS



Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Colorado counties cooperating. Cooperative Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.



Produced by  
**PARTNERS IN PARENTING (PIP)**  
A program of Colorado Family Education, Resources and Training with funding from the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Division and CSAP.

Colorado State University Extension  
4040 Campus Delivery  
Fort Collins, CO 80523  
(800) 457-2736  
CFERT.COLOSTATE.EDU



Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
FORT COLLINS, CO 80523  
PERMIT NO. 19