

# PET HEALTH ALERT

## Tobacco Is Toxic For Toto, Too

(NAPSA)—Anyone who is both a smoker and a pet owner can do one very important thing to protect the animal's life and his or her own: Quit smoking. A growing body of research—including the Surgeon General's report—shows there are no safe levels of exposure to secondhand smoke, for humans or for animals.

Toxins in secondhand smoke can cause lung and nasal cancer in dogs and lymphoma in cats, plus allergy and respiratory problems for other pets. Yet nearly 30 percent of pet owners live with at least one smoker.

That's why some groups are asking smokers with pets to "take it outside" or, even better, kick the habit altogether.

"While most Americans have been educated about the dangers of smoking to their own bodies and their children's, it is also important that pet owners take action to protect their beloved domestic animals from the dangers of secondhand smoke," said Dr. Cheryl G. Heaton, DrPH, president and CEO of the American Legacy Foundation, the national independent public health foundation dedicated to keeping young people from smoking and providing resources to smokers who want to quit.

"Nicotine from secondhand smoke can affect the nervous systems of cats and dogs," said Dr. Sharon Gwaltney-Brant, medical director of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' (ASPCA) Animal Poison Control Center. "Environmental tobacco smoke has been shown to contain numerous cancer-causing



**Secondhand smoke is bad for pets and for people. An estimated 50,000 Americans lose their lives to secondhand smoke annually, and 4 million youths (16 percent) are exposed to secondhand smoke at home.**

compounds, making it hazardous for animals as well as humans. Studies have shown increases in certain types of respiratory cancers in dogs that live in homes with smokers."

The groups hope pet owners who smoke will be motivated to quit once they learn about the dangers to their pets. The foundation provides resources and information to smokers who want to quit for good through a national campaign called EX—as in ex-smoker. It encourages smokers to approach quitting smoking as "re-learning life without cigarettes," which may include putting that cigarette out the next time they take the dog for a walk.

For more information, visit [www.becomeanex.org](http://www.becomeanex.org). To join or view the community of smokers who are quitting for the sake of their pets, visit <http://community.becomeanex.org/group/quittingforourpets> or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.