

# MMWR Highlights

## **Nonsmokers' Exposure to Secondhand Smoke in the United States, 1999–2008**

**Levels of secondhand smoke exposure have fallen substantially over the last 20 years in the United States.**

- During the years 1988–1991, approximately 88% of nonsmokers were exposed to secondhand smoke.
- By 1999–2000, that number dropped significantly to 52.5%.
- During 2007–2008, an estimated 40.1% of nonsmokers were exposed to secondhand smoke.

**Despite the dangers of secondhand smoke, 40% of nonsmokers in the United States (or 88 million people) were exposed to secondhand smoke in 2007–2008.**

- An estimated 53.6% of young children (aged 3–11 years) were exposed to secondhand smoke.
- About 46.5% of youth (aged 12–19 years) were exposed to secondhand smoke.
- About 55.9% of black, non-Hispanic nonsmokers were exposed to secondhand smoke, compared with 40.1% of white, non-Hispanic nonsmokers and 28.5% of Mexican-American nonsmokers.

**No risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure exists, and more needs to be done to reduce secondhand smoke exposure in the United States.**

- Workplaces and homes are the most important sources of secondhand smoke exposure.
- The only way to fully protect nonsmokers is to eliminate smoking in indoor spaces.
- Continued efforts to reduce secondhand smoke exposure in all settings are needed to ensure that all nonsmokers are protected from this hazard.
- Health care providers have an important role to play in educating patients and parents about the dangers of secondhand smoke and in helping smokers quit.