

KICK BUTTS. BREATHE FREE



By Nikki Hewlett

No Risk-Free Levels

Have you ever walked around campus taking in the fresh air and green scenery when all of the sudden you smell cigarette smoke? For the moment you are bothered by the smoke but you should know that there is more to secondhand smoke than the smell alone. Actually, the 2006 Surgeon General's Report concluded that "there is no risk free level of exposure to secondhand smoke." Adults who are exposed to secondhand smoke have immediate adverse affects on their cardiovascular system and exposure can cause heart and lung disease.

Smoke-Free Everywhere

There has been a growing trend for tobacco free policies all over the country. Over 94 college and university campuses have or are going tobacco-free, including the University of Iowa (29,000 students) in July 2009, University of Arkansas (18,000 students) in July 2008, and the University of Oklahoma (21,000 students) in July 2008. Recently, the Oregon Health Sciences University also established a policy that prohibits any use of tobacco products on its campus.

The Clean Air Project (CAP), a student run group working on a smoke-free policy, is not only working on a UO smoke-free policy but also with other OUS campuses towards a state-wide tobacco-free campus policy. Considering that

the majority of UO students come from tobacco-free K-12 campuses, we feel that regardless of the legality of smoking we deserve to be protected from a known carcinogen.

Why Go Smoke-Free?

There are many health and environmental concerns that have convinced people to go smoke-free.

Health reasons:

- Secondhand smoke kills 52,000 people annually in the US.
- Secondhand smoke is a known carcinogen and there is no safe level of exposure.
- Secondhand smoke can cause allergy and asthma attacks.

Environmental reasons:

- **Litter** – It takes up to 20 years for a cigarette butt to fully decompose. Our UO campus spends \$8,000 to \$10,000 annually and a minimum of 200 hours to clean them all up (STUDENT MONEY). CAP members and friends have picked up over 15,000 cigarette butts this academic year alone.
- **Deforestation** – Using tobacco products creates a continued demand for growing tobacco, which leads to clearing land for this crop and cutting trees to use as fuel to cure the tobacco.

- **Pesticides** – More than 25 million pounds of pesticides are used in tobacco production in the US each year, contaminating groundwater, surface water, rivers and lakes. It is also toxic to birds, beneficial insects, soil microorganisms and wildlife.

Want To Help Make the UO Smoke-Free?

CAP has made it our mission to eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke by creating a smoke-free policy on the UO campus. We need your help with this policy change. Come to a public forum to express your support.

Forum location: Knight Library Browsing Room

Forum dates and times:

Wednesday May 14th from 5-7pm

Thursday May 15th from 12-2pm

You can check us out on facebook or go to <http://healthed.uoregon.edu/> and click on the "Clean Air Project" link.

Want to quit smoking? Drop by the University Health Center for low-cost nicotine replacement products or visit a practitioner for a prescription. Peer educators are also available to advise you on quitting strategies.