

Passive smoking is a problem for pets too, says vet

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(PhysOrg.com) -- The dangers of passive smoking in people are well known, but how does it affect our pets?

Clare Knottenbelt, Professor of Small Animal Medicine and [Oncology](#) at the University of Glasgow's Small Animal Hospital, says second-hand smoke causes [health](#) problems in animals too.

She will address a seminar on second-hand smoke being held by NHS Ayrshire & Arran on Wednesday 26 October aimed at encouraging people to create a smoke-free atmosphere in their homes to protect the health of children and other relatives.

Prof Knottenbelt will speak about the research and mounting evidence which shows how damaging second-hand smoke is to the health of pets.

Prof Knottenbelt said: "We are all aware of the risks to our health of smoking and it is important we do everything we can to encourage people to stop smoking.

"As well as the risk to the smoker, there is the danger of second-hand smoke to others, including children, but pets are also at risk too.

"Several published studies have shown increased risk of lymphoma and oral cancer in cats, and an increased risk of lung, nasal and sinus cancer in dogs.

“Currently I am writing a research paper looking at levels of nicotine in the fur of dogs which indicates they are as exposed to the same levels of nicotine as children in a household. This may be a useful way of indicating second-hand smoke exposure in a household in general.

“While veterinary medicine is advancing all the time and we have the ability to treat some cancers in pets, it is expensive and provides no guarantees of long-term survival.

“The best way of avoiding damage to your [pet](#)’s health is to not smoke around them – or better still, to give up.”

Susan Downie, Health Promotion Officer from NHS Ayrshire & Arran, said: “While we know that the best thing smokers can do for themselves and their loved ones is to give up smoking, we also recognise that some people may not be ready to quit .

“In the meantime we want to encourage them to think about the health consequences of smoking for others in their homes and cars.

“Many animal lovers who are also smokers may not realise that their second-hand smoke will also be having an effect on their pets. We want to encourage as many smokers as possible to consider either smoking outside or making one room in their house the designated smoking room.

“By doing this and keeping smoke away from other people and pets in the house or car, smokers can ensure that their loved ones – including their pets, will not suffer from second-hand [smoking](#) related illnesses.”

Provided by University of Glasgow

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