



News Release
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Pledge to Make Your Home Smoke-free
Save your children's health, perhaps even their lives

(Salt Lake City, UT) - It's an easy way to show your loved ones they matter- stop smoking in your home and save your children's health, perhaps even their lives. That's the goal of the Smoke-free County Challenge sponsored by the Salt Lake Valley Health Department (SLVHD) and the National Association of Counties. Salt Lake County residents can pledge to make their home a "smoke-free zone" by going online to www.naco.org/smokefree.

The Smoke-free County Challenge encourages adults to make a commitment to keep tobacco products out of the house. If you smoke, this means you pledge not to smoke in your house. If you don't smoke yourself, you pledge to keep your home smoke-free by not allowing others to smoke in your house. The first ten counties throughout the country to collect 500 pledges will be awarded a small stipend to continue promoting the smoke-free homes pledge program.

"Some people may feel that opening a window or smoking in the house when the kids are gone is a safe alternative," says Kathy Baebler, SLVHD Tobacco Program Manager. "But, research has shown that even with the windows open in the house or the car, it still takes three hours for the dangerous chemicals found in secondhand smoke to clear from the area. When parents are informed about the facts, we believe they will be more than willing to make their home smoke-free."

According to the Utah Department of Health, more than 22,000 Utah children are exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes each year. Secondhand smoke is dangerous to everyone, but infants and children are at greatest risk because their lungs are still developing. Breathing secondhand smoke is associated with many illnesses in children, including sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), middle ear infections, and bronchitis. It also contributes to the development of new cases of asthma in healthy children, and those who breathe secondhand smoke have more frequent and severe asthma attacks. The Surgeon General has said that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

To take the smoke-free homes pledge online go to www.naco.org/smokefree. To receive a free pledge kit in the mail, call the Salt Lake Valley Health Department at 468-2506.

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