

## Study: Smokers Likely to Quit for Dog's Health

**New research looks at smoking behaviors of people who own or live with a pet.**

Posted: February 12, 2009, 5 a.m. EST

One more reason for smokers to kick the habit: It's bad for their pet's health, according to the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention at Henry Ford Health System in Detroit, Mich.

A study published Feb. 10 in the British Medical Journal Tobacco Control says that one in three smokers reported they are likely to quit smoking because it's bad for their pet. The study represents the first time researchers looked at the smoking patterns of people who own or live with a pet.

Participants were either smokers or non-smokers who lived with a dog, cat, or bird. Nearly 3,300 people responded to an online survey through the Michigan Humane Society, Pet Supplies Plus pet stores, and Henry Ford Health System.

Sharon Milberger, the study's lead author, said the goal is for smokers to realize that the health of their cat or dog is affected by their smoking habit. "Exposure to secondhand smoke," Milberger said, "has been linked to cancer, allergies, eye and skin diseases, and respiratory problems in dogs and cats."

The survey inquired about pets living in the home, smoking behaviors for themselves and of the people with whom they live, interest in quitting smoking, and smoking rules in the home.

Henry Ford researchers reported that: 28.4 percent of smokers said knowing that smoking was bad for their pets' health would motivate them to quit. 8.7 percent of smokers said knowing that smoking was bad for their pets' health would motivate them to ask their smoking partners to stop. 14 percent of smokers said they would tell their partner to smoke outdoors. Among non-smokers surveyed, more than 16 percent said they would ask their partner to quit, and 24 percent said they would tell their partner to smoke outside.