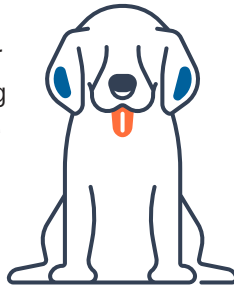# SMOKING AND PETS

YOUR QUIT JOURNEY STARTS TODAY.

Dogs and Cats:

Tobacco smoke can worsen symptoms for dogs and cats that already have breathing problems. Dogs with long noses are more likely to get nose cancer and dogs with shorter noses are more likely to get lung cancer, if their owners smoke around them. Cats breathe in secondhand smoke directly, just like dogs. When cats groom themselves, though, they also ingest thirdhand smoke particles that fall onto their fur, and are more likely to get mouth cancer.

Birds:

Birds are sensitive to pollution in the air. Just like children who live with smokers, birds have more infections and illnesses, if they are exposed to cigarette smoke. Birds also ingest smoke particles, when they preen their feathers or their owner's hair. Birds can also absorb harmful smoke residue through their feet, when they perch on their owner's clothes or hands.
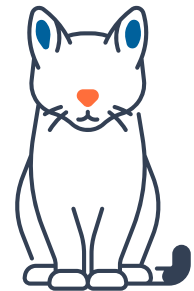
Small Mammals and Fish?

Hamsters and guinea pigs experience lung issues when exposed to smoke. Guinea pigs exposed to smoke have trouble metabolizing their food (their bodies are not able to use the nutrients in their food). This can cause them to be underweight. Additionally, nicotine dissolves in water and can poison fish in their tanks. A single cigarette butt dropped into a tank of minnows can kill half the fish in the tank.

Can nicotine poison my pets?

Yes. Pets can eat tobacco or ingest nicotine fluid from an e-cigarette. Even small amounts of nicotine can kill a pet. If you are using quit medication, make sure that you keep the medication in a safe place away from your pets. If your pet ingests nicotine, take it to an emergency veterinarian right away. Animals need help to get nicotine out of their systems. Signs of nicotine poisoning are:

- Vomiting
- Drooling
- Lethargy
- Shaking
- Fast heart rate
- Seizures

Reach out today, for all the help you need to stop smoking.

Call 1-800-Quit Now (1-800-784-8669)

Connect online at **QuitNowVirginia.org**

Text READY to 34191

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Tobacco Control Program

Quit Now Virginia