



Tomorrow's News

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The Tomorrow Project®: Albertans Studying the Connection Between Lifestyle and Cancer

In the Spotlight

The Tomorrow Project participants are part of a large and varied group of people. To date, there are 11,319 people enrolled from across Alberta. Each of these individuals has their own story and reason for becoming involved. For this issue we wanted to share a couple of these stories. Thank you to Ann and Armando for volunteering to tell us about themselves and why they agreed to join the Project.



The Thomas' from left to right: Andrew, Andrea, Alys and study participant, Ann

Ann Thomas and her husband Andrew have lived in Jasper for over 25 years. They own an advertising company that designs and produces brochures and other printed material for local companies. Their love of the mountains, cross country skiing, hiking, camping and swimming makes Jasper a perfect place to raise their two daughters Andrea and Alys, 9 and 5. In addition to being physically active, all four are also learning to play the piano.

When asked why she decided to take part in the study, Ann told us that her mom had cancer 20 years ago and was "lucky enough to beat it." More recently, she lost two close friends to cancer. Now Ann takes every opportunity to help and is happy to contribute to research about cancer causes and prevention.

Armando Hernandez and his wife Deborah have lived in Alberta for the past three years. Born in Mexico City, Armando moved to Calgary where both he and Deborah now work at the University of Calgary. Armando is with the Institute for Space Research where he is responsible for equipment that recreates the space



Study participant- Armando Hernandez

conditions that exist when Northern Lights occur.

In his spare time he enjoys painting with watercolours and running. Armando and his wife miss their families in Mexico but have come to love Calgary and hope to make it their permanent home.

When asked to join the study over two years ago, he remembers thinking "I have to do this - it is for research and it is for cancer." Three months later he learned that his sister has breast cancer, making Armando's commitment to the study even more personal.

You Asked Us

Why do you ask about second-hand smoke?

The Tomorrow Project is concerned with the links between health and lifestyle factors and the causes of cancer. It is important to know about the exposures people have to a variety of factors that are associated with cancer risk, including exposure to second-hand smoke.

Second-hand smoke, or environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), is a combination of exhaled smoke from a smoker, smoke released from a smoldering cigarette, contaminants released into the air while puffing, and substances diffusing through the cigarette paper and the mouth-end of a cigarette between puffs. Smoke from the burning end of a cigarette contains higher concentrations of hazardous substances than the smoke inhaled directly by a smoker. It has twice as much nicotine, three times as much tar and five times as much carbon monoxide.

Filter tips can significantly reduce the concentrations of compounds inhaled by a smoker, however contaminants from the burning tip of a cigarette are unfiltered.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the US Environmental Protection Agency have classified secondhand smoke as a compound that causes cancer in humans. The cancers most frequently associated with second-hand smoke exposure are lung and nasal sinus.



The following information describes the experience of non-smokers from six health regions in Alberta who enrolled in *The Tomorrow Project* between October 2000 and November 2001.

- During the previous year, 22% of non-smokers were exposed to second-hand smoke on most days.
- Places where people were in contact with secondhand smoke were:
 - Public places (94%)
 - Visiting friends/relatives (81%)
 - Private vehicle (57%)
 - Work place (54%)
 - At home (44%)

This pattern was similar for rural and urban residents and for younger and older people.

- Men were more likely than women to encounter second-hand smoke in the workplace (68% vs. 40%); whereas women were more likely than men to be exposed to second-hand smoke at home (51% vs. 37%).

Are you moving? Questions about a survey?

Contact Us

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For more information about the health risks of secondhand smoke, call the Alberta Lung Association's Health Education Line at 1-800-661-5864, or try these websites:

www.tobaccotruth.com

www.gosmokefree.com

Great Response to Blood Sample Pilot Study

Giving blood at a lab is not everyone's idea of a great time, but between December 2001 and June 2002, 752 participants from the Calgary and Red Deer areas met the challenge.

Each person contributed about three tablespoons of blood to be frozen and stored in a 'biorepository' securely housed in the Tom Baker Cancer Centre.

Scientists in the future will use this important resource to investigate the links between cancer and factors such as diet and heredity among Albertans.

The blood collection study was a pilot study of *The Tomorrow Project*. The goals were to learn how willing participants would be to give blood and to determine what challenges our Alberta weather would throw at the task of transporting the samples to Calgary within 24 hours of collection!

We learned a great deal from the pilot study. The response rate to date has been a gratifying 65%. Thank you to all participants who took the time out of busy schedules or traveled distances to give your sample at a local lab. And while the Alberta weather was a factor when the mercury plunged below -30°C during the winter, the large majority of samples did reach the lab in less than 24 hours.

If you received a package of tubes and would like to participate, there is still time. Call our toll free number for information on how to take part, 1-877-919-9292.



A research initiative of the Alberta Cancer Board