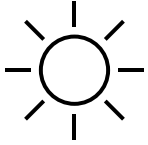


Keeping Your Indoor Air Safe from Pollutants

What Is Air Quality and Why Is It Important?

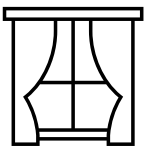
Air quality refers to how clean or polluted outdoor or indoor air is.

Outdoor Air



Smog is unhealthy outdoor air that forms when pollutants from trucks, cars, power plants, refineries and other sources chemically react with the sun. Some smog matter can be seen, like on days when the sky is yellow and hazy. Higher temperatures from climate change have led to more allergens and harmful pollutants in the air.

Indoor Air

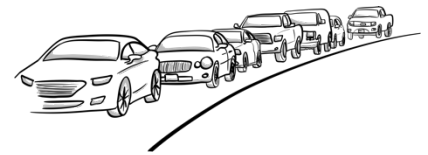


Air inside homes can become polluted from pet dander, mold, or everyday activities, such as:

- Cooking with gas stoves that release harmful pollutants into the air.
- Cleaning with household cleaners that release harmful gases into the air from liquids like aerosol sprays and liquid cleaners.

Health Impacts of Air Pollution

Air pollutants can harm our health and may be especially harmful to babies, children, older persons, and people with less mobility.



Breathing polluted air can lead to health problems like asthma attacks; eyes, nose, and throat irritation; preterm births and low birth weight babies; and may even shorten your life.

Polluted air may be more harmful for some people than others; for example, those who:

- Have existing health issues such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease, and respiratory diseases.
- Live near freeways, roads, and industrial sites that release harmful chemicals that pollute the air, land, and water.
- Work or exercise outside.
- Have added challenges like lower income, live in communities with less resources, have experienced racism, trauma, and mental health issues.

What Steps Can I Take to Improve My Indoor Air Quality?



Keep Indoor Air Clean

- Do not smoke indoors. Ask smokers to go outside and away from children.
- Do not burn wood. It adds harmful soot to the air in your neighborhood.
- Use cleaning products and hobby supplies that are less toxic. Go to <https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice> to find safer products.
- Store hazardous chemicals outside of your home.
- If your outdoor air is safe, open windows or use a kitchen exhaust fan when cooking with a gas stove.
- Use a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) cleaner to improve air quality in your home. For more information, visit: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/list-carb-certified-air-cleaning-devices>.

Keeping Your Indoor Air Safe from Pollutants



Keep Indoor Air Free of Dust and Particles

- When dusting, use wet rags and mops to clean without stirring up dust into the air.
- Put away food, cover trash and use bait to control pests, like mice and cockroaches.
- Limit exposure to cat and dog fur. Regularly use a HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) type vacuum to effectively reduce the allergens (pet dander) in your home.



Keep Ventilation Flowing Indoors

- Ventilate by opening windows to add fresh air or use exhaust fans to move air to the outside.
- Don't use scented candles or fragrances to hide odors. They may include ingredients that irritate eyes, nose, and throat and can make sinus conditions worse or trigger asthma attacks. Figure out what is causing the odors and remove the source of the smell.
- If outdoor air quality is bad, don't open your windows and doors during peak pollution hours (for example, during rush-hour traffic).



Keep Indoor Air Free of Mold

Breathing in mold can cause health effects like allergic reactions, sneezing, stuffy nose, red eyes, and skin rash.

- Keep humidity and moisture levels inside your home low to avoid mold from growing.
 - Keep humidity levels under 50% using a dehumidifier or air conditioner. Clean equipment regularly so it doesn't make more pollution when it gets dirty.
 - Open windows and/or turn on exhaust fans while cooking and taking showers or baths.
 - Fix all leaks and drips in the home.
 - Clean any active mildew or mold that is less than 3 ft by 3ft yourself. Use safe methods like scrubbing mold off hard surfaces with detergent and water, and dry completely. Wear an N95 or KN95 respirator mask and plastic or rubber gloves to avoid breathing mold or mold spores during the cleaning.

What Else Can I Do?

Check the Level of Air Pollution in Your Area

- Air quality isn't the same everywhere. Pollution can build up in specific areas and at specific times, such as near industries, or a busy freeway or road during rush hour traffic. To learn more about the air quality in your area, visit <https://www.airnow.gov>. This website uses a color to tell us if the air quality is healthy or unhealthy.
- If the air quality is bad, stay inside with the windows & doors closed during peak pollution hours (rush-hour traffic).

Report Environmental Problems

- If you live in an apartment with five or more units, call Environmental Health Services at (888) 700-9995 Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. to report issues with indoor air like mold, leaks, or vermin.
- Report issues with outdoor air by calling 1-800-CUT-SMOG (1-800-288-7664). Be ready to describe the problem in detail.
- If you are having health symptoms due to air quality, speak with your doctor to let them know your concerns.
 - If you don't have a doctor, call the Department of Public Social Services at (866) 613-3777; or visit <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Get-Medi-Cal/Pages/asset-limits.aspx>