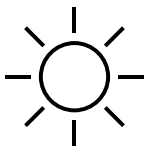


Air Pollution: Tips for Protecting Your Health

What Is Air Quality and Why Is It Important?

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

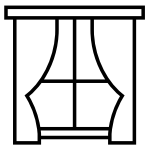
Outdoor Air



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, for example, on days when the sky is yellow and hazy. Smog matter can also be too small to be seen. Higher temperatures from climate change have led to more allergens and harmful pollutants in the air.

Poor air quality can hurt human health and the environment in many ways. We need clean air to breathe for good health and to sustain life in our environment.

Indoor Air



Air inside homes can become polluted from pet dander, mold, or everyday activities. Some everyday activities that pollute indoor air are:

- 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.
- Opening your windows when outdoor air is bad.

We spend many hours each day inside our homes. Indoor air pollutants can harm our health and may be especially harmful to babies, children, the elderly, and people with less mobility. We all deserve to breathe clean and healthy air in our homes.

Health Impacts of Air Pollution

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.
- Work or exercise outside.
- Live near freeways, roads, and industrial sites that release harmful chemicals that pollute the air, land, and water.
- Have added challenges like having lower income, live in areas with less resources, have experienced racism, trauma, and mental health issues.



Air Pollution: Tips for Protecting Your Health

What Steps Can I Take to Improve Outdoor Air Quality?

Outdoor air pollutants are found all around us. They can harm your health and the environment.



- Drive less, especially on days with unhealthy air.
- Organize errands into one trip to drive less.
- Walk or ride a bike when possible.
- Take public transportation when possible.

What Steps Can I Take to Protect Myself from Unhealthy Outdoor Air Quality?



- 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, for example, near industries, or a busy freeway or road during rush hour traffic.
 - To learn more about the air quality in your area, go to AirNow.gov. The website uses a color-coded visual that tells you if the air quality is healthy or unhealthy for you. It reports air quality using the official U.S. Air Quality Index (AQI). An AQI value over 100 is considered unhealthy.
 - If the air quality is bad, stay inside with the windows & doors closed during peak pollution hours (rush-hour traffic).
- Limit your exposure to air pollution:
 - Avoid exercising near areas with a lot of traffic. When air is bad, walk indoors in a mall, gym, or on an exercise machine.
 - Limit the time children spend outside when the air quality is bad.
- Don't open your windows and doors during peak pollution hours, like during rush-hour traffic.
- Use a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) cleaner to improve air quality in your home. For more information, go to this website <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/list-carb-certified-air-cleaning-devices>.

What Else Can I Do?

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>