

Outdoor Air Pollution

Air pollution refers to harmful gases or particles in the air that come from both natural and man-made sources.

Types of Air Pollutants:

Particulate Matter
small solid particles and liquid droplets present in the air

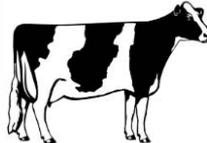
Gases
sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, chemical vapors, etc.

Ground-level Ozone
created when sunlight reacts with gases in the air

Sources of Air Pollution



Natural Sources
Forest fires, volcanoes, pollen



Agriculture
Livestock, animal waste, fertilizer



Energy Use
Household & powerplants



Dust
From activities such as construction



Industry
Oil refineries, factories, etc.

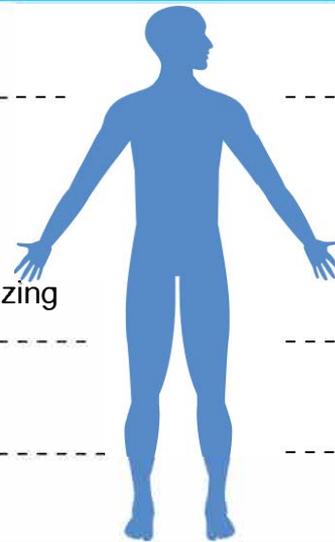


Transportation
Cars, buses, planes, trucks, and trains



Waste Management
Emissions from landfill & trucks

Health Effects of Air Pollution



Cardiovascular

- heart disease
- chest pain
- palpitations
- high blood pressure

Respiratory

- asthma attacks and wheezing
- lung diseases
- lung cancer

Endocrine

- Obesity
- Diabetes

Brain Function

- impaired brain development
- increased autism risk
- mental health issues
- neurodegenerative disorders

Pregnancy

- preterm birth
- low birth weight
- asthma in infants

Mortality

- Lower life expectancy

Who is Most Affected?

People who work outdoors
Jobs where there is high exposure to contaminated air



People with pre-existing conditions
Respiratory issues, cardiovascular, & mental health



Frontline Communities
Low-income, communities of color are disproportionately exposed to air pollution



Pregnant women



Infants and young children



Older adults & the elderly



How Can I Reduce My Exposure to Outdoor Air Pollution?



Avoid Heavy Traffic



Don't idle your vehicle



Plan outdoor activities when and where pollution levels are lower



Check your local air quality by using the air quality index (AQI) on airnow.gov

Air Quality Index (AQI)

The AQI is an index for reporting daily air quality. The index is broken into six different number ranges and color categories. Increasing index values correspond to increased health risks

Good

0-50

Air pollution poses little or no risk.

Moderate

51-100

Potential health impacts for sensitive groups.

Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups

101-150

Sensitive groups may experience health effects.

Unhealthy

151-200

Everyone may experience health effects. Limit heavy outdoor activity

Very Unhealthy

201-300

Everyone should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion outdoors

Hazardous

301-500

Health Warnings of emergency conditions. Avoid all physical activity outdoors

How Can I Reduce my Contribution to Air Pollution?



Walk, bike ride, carpool, or take public transportation



Support industries taking steps to reduce contribution to air pollution.



Recycle and avoid single use plastics



Choose energy saver appliances and lightbulbs and unplug items not in use



Support national, state and local laws that reduce air pollution



Plant trees and support local parks & green spaces



Preventing air pollution reduces impacts of climate change.



Join a group that is working to reduce air pollution in your community