

## Center for Disease Control Web site info

### Particulate Matter and Health

Being exposed to any kind of particulate matter may cause

- increased emergency department visits and hospital stays for breathing and heart problems,
- worsened asthma symptoms,
- adverse birth outcomes,
- breathing problems,
- decreased lung growth in children,
- lung cancer, and
- early deaths.

People who are at the highest risk of being bothered by particulate matter include

- **people with heart or lung diseases** because they will feel the effects of particulate matter sooner and at lower ozone levels than less-sensitive people.
- **older adults** because they may not know they have lung or heart disease. When particle levels are high, older adults are more likely than young adults to have to go to the hospital or die because the exposure to particle pollution has made their heart or lung disease worse.
- **children** because they are still growing and spend more time at high activity levels. When children come in contact with particle pollution over a long period of time they may have problems as their lungs and airways are developing. This exposure may put them at risk for lowered lung function and other respiratory problems later in life. Children are more likely than adults to have asthma and other respiratory problems that can worsen when particle pollution is high.
- **infants** because their lungs continue to develop after birth and can be impacted by air pollutants.

### Protect yourself and your family

[EPA's Air Quality Index](#), or AQI, is a tool to help you quickly learn when air pollution is likely to reach unhealthy levels. Local TV stations, radio programs, and newspapers carry these air quality forecasts to tell you when particle levels are likely to be unhealthy. You can use the AQI to plan your daily activities to reduce exposure to particle pollution.

When particle pollution levels are high, you can

- reduce the amount of time you spend outside;
- do easier outdoor activities, such as walking instead of running or using a riding lawn mower instead of a push mower; and
- exercise away from roads and highways. Particle pollution is usually worse near these areas.

If you have one of the following diseases, you may experience some effects from particle pollution:

#### Lung disease

- You may not be able to breathe as deeply or strongly as you usually do.
- You may cough more, have chest pain, wheeze, feel like you can't catch your breath, or be tired more than usual.

#### Heart disease

- Coming in contact with particle pollution can cause serious problems in a short period of time, such as a heart attack without any warning signs.
- Symptoms, including chest pain or tightness, fast heartbeat, feeling out of breath, and feeling tired more than usual, may be signs of a serious problem. If you have any of these signs, follow your doctor's advice and contact your doctor if the symptoms last longer than usual or worsen.

#### Asthma

- Follow your asthma management plan when particle levels are high.

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