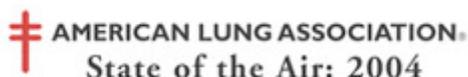




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Infants and children age 14 and younger may be especially susceptible to the health effects of ozone and particle pollution, because their lungs are still developing. Children have greater exposure to air pollution because of their faster breathing rates and the amount of time they spend playing outdoors.^[i] Ozone and particle air pollution can aggravate asthma, wheezing, coughing and may reduce lung function in children. Over the long term, some studies have indicated that pollution may stunt lung function growth.^[ii]

Hundreds of community health studies have linked unhealthy levels of ozone and particle pollution to reduced lung function, greater use of asthma medications, and increased rates of school absenteeism, emergency room visits, hospital admissions.^[iii] High levels of particle pollution have also been shown to increase the risk of premature death.

The good news is parents can take precautions to reduce health risks of to their children. Here are some health tips for protecting your kids on high pollution days:

PROTECTION TIPS

- Be aware of the quality of the air your family breathes year-round. Check your daily air-quality levels and air-pollution forecasts. These are often given with local weather reports and printed in newspapers and are available online at www.epa.gov/airnow/.

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- Be especially conscious of smog levels during hot weather. Ozone smog tends to be worst during the May-to-October. If you can see dirty air, presume it could make your children sick. Particle pollution can happen throughout the year.
- Keep an eye on your child's health, If your child has difficulty breathing on high air pollution days such as coughing regularly, and shortness of breath, share your observations with your pediatrician. Children with asthma are especially sensitive to air pollution.
- Try to limit the amount of time your child spends outdoors in vigorous play if the air quality is unhealthy.
- Keep all your children's outdoor activities as far as possible from busy roadways and other sources of pollution.
- Avoid congested streets and rush hour traffic because motor vehicles are a primary source of air pollution.
- If your child has asthma, take special care to make sure they have their inhalers with them on bad air days for emergency relief.
- Make sure your child's teachers, coaches and camp directors are aware of the health risks of air pollution, and have policies in place to protect the kids when air quality is unhealthy. If your child has asthma, it is important that these caregivers know he or she is especially vulnerable on high pollution days. Your child's asthma action plan should include information on what to do on high pollution days.

PREVENTION TIPS

- Don't smoke around children, especially indoors, and don't let others smoke in your home or car.
- Do not burn wood, which creates particle pollution indoors and out. Don't burn trash either.
- Encourage your child to walk, use

bicycles and take public transportation. Walk, bike and take public transportation with your child to encourage him or her to help clean up the air.

- Encourage your child's school to look at ways to clean up school buses. While school buses are a safe way for children to get to school, most buses use heavily polluting diesel engines. Newer fuels and engines are cleaner. Many school systems are using EPA's Clean School Bus Campaign to clean up these dirty emissions.

ACTION TIPS

- The American Lung Association urges Americans to contact members of Congress to oppose any bills that would weaken the Clean Air Act and to oppose the Administration's Clear Skies Initiative
 - Americans can log on the American Lung Association's website (www.lungusa.org) to make their voices heard to Congress on these critical issues.
 - Contact your local American Lung Association for more information about air pollution, lung health and local air quality control at 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872), or visit www.lungusa.org.
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[i] Bates DV. The effects of air pollution on children. Environ Health Perspect 1995 103 Suppl 6:49-53.

[ii] Gauderman WJ, Gilliland GF, Vora H, Avol E, Stram D, McConnell R, Thomas D, Lurmann F, Margolis HG, Rappaport EB, Berhane K, and Peters JM. Association between air pollution and lung function growth in Southern California children: Results from a second cohort. Am J Respir Crit Care Med 2002; 166(1):76-84; and Horak F Jr, Studnicka M, Gartner C, Spengler JD, Tauber E, Urbanek R, Veiter A, and Frischer T. Particulate matter and lung function growth in children: A 3-yr Follow-up Study in Austrian Schoolchildren. Eur Respir J 2002 ; 19(5):838-45.

[iii] California Air Resources Board and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. Staff Report: Public Hearing to Consider Amendments to the Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter and Sulfates.

May 3, 2002. U.S. EPA. Smog--Who Does It Hurt? What You Need to Know About Ozone and Your Health, EPA-452/K-99-001, July 1999. Künzli, N., Lurmann, F., Segal, M., Ngo, L., Balmes, J., and Tager, I.B. Association Between Lifetime Ambient Ozone Exposure and Pulmonary Function in College Freshmen--Results of a Pilot Study. Environmental Research, 1997. 72: 8-23.



The mission of the American Lung Association is to prevent lung disease and promote lung health.

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