

Air Pollution

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Air pollution is made up of many kinds of gases, droplets and particles that reduce the quality of the air. Air can be polluted in both the city and the country.

In the city, cars, buses and airplanes, as well as industry and construction may cause air pollution. In the country, dust from tractors plowing fields, trucks and cars driving on dirt or gravel roads, rock quarries and smoke from wood and crop fires may cause air pollution.

Ground-level ozone is the major part of air pollution in most cities. Ground-level ozone is created when engine and fuel gases already released into the air interact when sunlight hits them. Ozone levels increase in cities when the air is still, the sun is bright and the temperature is warm. Ground-level ozone should not be confused with the "good" ozone that is miles up in the atmosphere and that protects us from the sun's harmful radiation.

Air pollution can irritate the eyes, throat and lungs. Burning eyes, cough and chest tightness are common with exposure to high levels of air pollution.

Different people can react very differently to air pollution. Some people may notice chest tightness or cough, while others may not notice any effects. Because exercise requires faster, deeper breathing, it may increase the symptoms. People with heart disease, such as angina (chest pain), or with lung disease, such as asthma or emphysema, may be very

sensitive to air pollution exposure, and may notice symptoms when others do not.

Fortunately for most healthy people, the symptoms of air pollution exposure usually go away as soon as the air quality improves. However, certain groups of people are more sensitive to the effects of air pollution than others.

Children probably feel the effects of lower levels of pollution than adults. They also experience more illness, such as bronchitis and earaches, in areas of high pollution than in areas with cleaner air.

People with heart or lung disease also react more severely to polluted air. During times of heavy pollution, their condition may worsen to the point that they must limit their activities or even seek additional medical care. In the past, a number of deaths have been associated with severely polluted conditions. Pollution this bad is rare today in the United States.

Air Pollution is something that the world needs to learn how to and prevent!