

POLLUTANTS AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

Pollution is the release of environmental contaminants. These are things that are harmful to our environment and also to our health. There are several forms of pollution.

Air Pollution, which is when chemicals and particulates are released into the atmosphere.

Water Pollution, which is contamination from rain, snowmelt or other sources that flow over the land surface, also known as surface runoff, and groundwater contamination, which is when contaminants make their way to our water located under the ground surface.

Soil Contamination, which happens when chemicals are released by spill or underground storage tanks that leak.

Radioactive Contamination is another contaminant of our environment.

Pollutants then are all the things that contaminate and affect our environment. One kind of pollution hazardous to our health is **indoor pollution**. It may also be one of the forms of pollution that affects us the most because there are so many pollutants that are released into an enclosed area and they are so close to each other that they are more likely to reach our lungs than those pollutants that are released outdoors. One of the major pollutants found in indoor pollution is **Tobacco Smoke**. This smoke has a lot of chemicals that are

harmful to us, and causes a lot of health problems. It is known to cause cancer in the smoker, but it also affects those who do not smoke. It can affect small children who have never smoked. It can cause your throat, eyes and nose to be irritated, it can cause respiratory problems like asthma and bronchitis, and affect the way your lungs work.

Pollutants can affect our environment in many ways. **Acid Rain** is another way that pollutants affect our environment. **Acid Rain** occurs when sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides combine with water vapour in the atmosphere and fall back as rain, snow or fog. Acid rain affects our natural water supplies, such as lakes, streams, and rivers. It also affects our forest and soil. It also affects our health.

Another pollutant that affects our environment and health is **Smog**. Smog looks like fog; it looks like a misty cloud almost. It causes difficulty breathing and is harmful to animals, plants and humans. It is formed by pollutants that are released from gasoline and vehicles that use diesel fuel, such as trucks, cars and boats. Smog is known to cause respiratory problems and death.

Air pollution is one of the biggest health and environmental problems. All these pollutants that are inhaled affect our health in a serious way. Because we breathe them into our lungs,

they also enter our blood and through our blood they travel through our body. Because they are deposited on soil, plants and water, we are exposed to them even more, because they are in the fruits and vegetables we eat and in the water that we drink.

So pollutants affect every point of our lives, through contamination of our environment, air, water, soil and plants.

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