



AIR POLLUTION, CLIMATE CHANGE AND YOUR HEALTH

Health and Air Quality Bulletin

Both air pollution and climate change could affect your health. This is why it's important for you to know something about them so you can better protect yourself.

Air Pollution

Air pollution is largely caused by the by-products of our use of fossil fuels.

By-products include ground-level ozone, fine airborne particles, as well as carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and sulphur oxides.

This mix of substances is often called smog, which occurs usually during the summer.

Air pollution has no boundaries. You can be exposed in either urban or rural environments. And it also occurs in the winter.

Climate Change

Climate change – also known as global warming – is caused mainly by our use of fossil fuels.

This releases greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.



Scientists believe the buildup of these gases is responsible for the warming trend seen in the past few decades.

Climate change has no boundaries, affecting the world's population.

Fossil fuels include coal, oil and gas. Motor vehicles, industrial activity, wood-burning stoves and thermoelectric power generation produce air pollution and contribute to climate change.

Your Health Could Be Affected

Air pollution is linked to:

- reduced lung function
- respiratory symptoms

- doctor and emergency room visits
- new or recurring cases of respiratory illness
- hospital admissions
- increased medication use

Consult your health care provider if you have concerns about the effects of air pollution on your health or that of your children.

Effects of climate change could include:

- more air pollution
- more diseases transmitted by rodents, ticks or mosquitoes due to changes in precipitation and temperature
- a decrease in the quality and quantity of drinking and recreational water
- threatened water sources because of drought or rapidly shrinking glaciers
- more intense exposure to ultraviolet rays due to the thinning ozone layer, leading to more skin cancer, impaired vision, and other diseases
- compromised food production and food safety because of pollutants and environmental changes
- more severe and frequent extreme weather events such as heat waves, storms, floods and tornadoes

Help Reduce Air Pollution By Taking Action

Carpool, use public transport where possible, cycle or walk

For information on what you can do to help reduce climate change and air pollution and protect your health, please consult www.hc-sc.gc.ca/air or contact us at 613-957-1876.

Our mission is to help the people of Canada maintain and improve their health.

Health Canada

