



INDOOR AIR POLLUTION AND YOUR HEALTH

Health and Air Quality Bulletin

In Canada, we spend the majority of our time indoors. We're also becoming aware of the harmful effects of indoor air pollution on our health. When indoor ventilation is limited, pollution can accumulate inside, sometimes reaching higher concentrations than what we find outside. This is why it's important for you to know something about it so you can better protect yourself.

To understand its impact on your health, researchers have examined indoor air quality in homes, schools and the workplace. In particular, Health Canada has identified second-hand tobacco smoke as an important factor influencing your health.

The Canadian government has responded by being the first country to develop guidelines covering various indoor air pollutants. Some of these pollutants, such as fine airborne particles and gases like carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide, are also found outdoors.



Effects on Your Health

Air pollution can:

- irritate your respiratory system, causing inflammation of the lungs
- reduce lung function, making it harder to breathe
- aggravate asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- result in a hospital admission, increased medication use, or even death

Some Sources of Indoor Air Pollution

- **Tobacco smoke**
 - the most common indoor air pollutant
 - *Quit smoking to reduce risk to yourself and those around you*
- **Biological pollutants**
 - includes allergens produced by dust mites, pets and moulds
 - dust mites and moulds increase in humid environments
 - *Fix poor ventilation, damp rooms and water leaks*
- **Chemical pollutants**
 - come from cooking, cleaning, wood-burning stoves, construction materials
 - paint, carpets, new furnishings and pesticides
 - *Ensure proper ventilation*
 - *Manipulate products with care and according to instructions*

Children, people with heart and lung disease, and seniors may be especially sensitive to air pollution.

NEGATIVE HEALTH EFFECTS INCREASE AS AIR POLLUTION WORSENS

For More Information

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

Visit Health Canada's Health and Air Quality website at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/air or call 613-957-1876 to learn more about how air pollution affects you and what you can do to help reduce it.

Visit the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation website at www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca or call 1-800-668-2642 to learn more about how to reduce air pollution in your home.

Visit Health Canada's *Go Smokefree!* website at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hecs-sesc/tobacco/index.html> or call 1-866-318-1116 to learn more about the health effects of first- or second-hand smoke and for advice on how to quit.

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

Health Canada

