



# AIR POLLUTION AND HEART AND LUNG DISEASE

## Health and Air Quality Bulletin

If you have heart or lung disease, air pollution could have a negative impact on your health. This is why it's important for you to know something about it so you can better protect yourself.

### Effects on Your Health

Air pollution can:

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

*NEGATIVE HEALTH  
EFFECTS INCREASE AS  
AIR POLLUTION WORSENS*

If you have any of the following heart and lung conditions, you may be more affected by air pollution:

- angina (ischemic or coronary heart disease)
- congestive heart failure (heart failure)



- heart rhythm problems (arrhythmia or dysrhythmia)
- asthma
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (bronchitis, emphysema)
- lung infections
- lung cancer

### Sources of Air Pollution

Sources include motor vehicles, industrial activity, wood-burning stoves and thermoelectric power generation.

Air pollution includes ground-level ozone and 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.

### What You Can Do to Protect Yourself

- Follow your health care provider's advice about the best way to manage your condition.
- Listen to radio or television weather reports or read your local newspaper for information about air quality and media smog advisories.
- When air pollution levels are high, consider rescheduling strenuous activities.

#### You Can Help Reduce Air Pollution

You can play an important role in reducing air pollution by:

- Driving less or car pooling
- Using public transport

Visit Health Canada's Health and Air Quality website at [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/air](http://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.

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

Health Canada

