



# OUTDOOR AIR POLLUTION AND YOUR HEALTH: WHAT'S THE COST?

## Health and Air Quality Bulletin

In Canada, we're becoming aware of the harmful effects of air pollution on our health. But what's the economic cost?

To understand both the human and financial burden, we have to look at the effects air pollution has on your health.

### Effects on Your Health

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



### Economic Cost

These health effects have a human, social and financial impact, costing Canadians several billion dollars per year. This concerns us all. So policy-makers across Canada and internationally are looking at options to help reduce the effects of pollution.

These options include new regulations.

For example, you might have heard the federal government is regulating the amount of sulphur in gasoline. This may result in increased costs to the industrial sector as production operations are changed to comply with new emission standards.

With reduced sulphur in the air, you could see:

- reduced health care costs and out-of-pocket expenses for illnesses related to air pollution
- increased productivity in the workplace
- improved quality of life
- fewer premature deaths resulting from air pollution

This is why policymakers continue to look at the costs and benefits of proposed actions like sulphur reduction. This helps determine which action will have the most overall benefit for you.

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

**NEGATIVE HEALTH EFFECTS INCREASE AS AIR POLLUTION WORSENS**

#### You Can Make A Difference

Reduce the burden of air pollution by taking action:

Carpool, use public transport where possible, cycle or walk

Whatever you decide, remember that people do make a difference and this makes good economic sense!

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

