



AIR POLLUTION AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Health and Air Quality Bulletin

Air pollution can have an impact on your health. This is why it's important for you to know something about it so you can better protect yourself. You can also learn about some of the solutions to help reduce air pollution in your neighbourhood.

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



Populations at Risk

- people who suffer from heart and lung problems
- seniors
- children

Even healthy adults breathe less efficiently on days when the air is heavily polluted.

Sources of Air Pollution

Sources of pollution 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

Listen to radio or television weather reports or read your local newspaper for information about air quality and media smog advisories. Plan your day based on this information, and when air pollution levels are high, consider rescheduling strenuous outdoor activities.



Minimize physical activity near heavy traffic areas, especially during rush hour, to reduce your exposure to pollution from motor vehicles.

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

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 where possible
- using active transportation

Active Transportation

Active transportation refers to human-powered transportation such as:

- walking or jogging
- cycling
- in-line skating or skateboarding

Try combining it. For example, try cycling and busing, or walking and car pooling.

Active Transportation is Good for You

Active transportation is a great way to build physical activity into your daily life. According to *Canada's Physical Activity Guide*, you can improve your health by accumulating 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity most days, added-up in periods of at least 10 minutes each.

Regular physical activity reduces the risk of premature death, heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, adult-onset diabetes, osteoporosis, stroke, depression and colon cancer.

Addressing the Barriers

Canadians say that lack of time is the greatest personal barrier to being physically active. Active transportation helps break down this barrier by building physical activity into daily commuting habits and errands.

Did You Know That...

For distances up to 5 km, cycling is the fastest door-to-door mode of travel. Try it whenever you are commuting to work, traveling to and from school, doing errands or going to recreational and leisure activities.

Active transportation also saves you money. It costs an average of \$7,000 per year to own and operate a motor vehicle, but only \$150 annually for a bicycle, and virtually no cost at all for walking. By choosing active transportation, you can reduce operating costs and wear and tear on your vehicle and, at the same time, reduce air pollution.

Commit to Active Transportation

Choose a destination in your community and commit to active transportation. Tell yourself, "I'll always walk to the bank and ride my bike to the corner store." There are so many short trips where you can choose active transportation – to go to the library, park, recreation centre, school, or coffee shop.

**GET ACTIVE – GET CANADA'S
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDE**

Call 1-888-334-9769 or visit the web site:

www.paguide.com