**AIR POLLUTION:**

**WHAT IS PARTICULATE MATTER (PM)?**

PM is a mixture of small liquid and solid particles in the air we breathe. They vary in size and chemical make-up. PM is a component of smog.

**WHO IS MOST AT RISK TO AIR POLLUTION?**

Even healthy young adults can experience health issues on days when the air is heavily polluted but some groups are more at risk:

- Children
- Seniors
- People with asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cardiovascular diseases, diabetes
- Active people of all ages who exercise or work hard outdoors

**HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM AIR POLLUTION?**

Know when the air is unhealthy:

- Check the Air Quality Health Index in your community to find out the best time to be active outside (airhealth.ca)
- If you have a heart or lung condition, talk to your health care professional about additional ways to protect your health when air pollution levels are high

Ways to reduce exposure:

- Avoid or reduce strenuous outdoor activities when air pollution levels are high
- Avoid or reduce exercising near areas of heavy traffic, especially during rush hour

**WHAT ACTION IS THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TAKING ON PM?**

- Federal regulations have reduced PM emissions in Canada from key sources.
- Canada has agreed to international treaties to reduce PM emissions.
- Canada has established the Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS). These are health- and environment-based numerical values of outdoor air concentrations of pollutants intended to drive continuous air quality improvement in Canada. The CAAQS, a key element of the Air Quality Management System, were developed through a process steered by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME).

**LEVELS OF PM IN OUTDOOR AIR**

Levels of PM in outdoor air can vary by region and by season. More information can be found on the STATE OF THE AIR website http://airquality-qualifiedelair.ccme.ca/en

**WHERE DOES PM COME FROM?**

PM can come directly from man-made and natural sources or be formed by reactions among other pollutants. Main sources of PM are (but not limited to):

- Road dust
- Construction
- Agriculture
- Vehicle emissions
- Industry
- Wood burning
- Forest fires
- Road dust

**HEALTH EFFECTS OF PARTICULATE MATTER**

Health effects of PM can occur even at very low concentrations, including:

- Increased lung problems
- Increased heart problems
- Increased hospital admissions
- Increased medical visits
- Lung cancer
- Premature death

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON AIR POLLUTION, PLEASE VISIT**

[www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/air-quality.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/air-quality.html) or contact us at: HC.air.SC@canada.ca

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