

What is outdoor air pollution?

There are many things in the air we breathe that cause pollution, but here in Dane County we are mostly concerned with **ozone** and **particulate matter**.

What is ozone?

- There are two types of ozone dependent upon the distance from the surface:
 - » Ozone located miles above the ground protects us from the sun.
 - » Ozone located at ground level impacts air quality and breathing it can cause health problems.
- Ground level ozone is created when exhaust from cars and industry mix with other chemicals in the air under sunny and warm conditions, mostly during the summer.

What is particulate matter?

- Particulate matter consists of tiny pieces of dust, dirt and other materials suspended in the air we breathe.
- Breathing particulate matter can be **bad** for your heart and lungs.
- When there is a lot of it, it can make the air look dirty, hazy, or brown.



Air Quality Index

The Air Quality Index **tells you if the air outside is safe** to breathe. For example, if the index value is 25 then the air is “good” (green). “Good” means the air is fine to breathe. Read the “How do I protect myself?” section to learn more.

Index Value	The value tells us the air is...	What this means for you:
0 - 50	Good	Enjoy your normal activities.
51 - 100	Moderate	Extremely sensitive* people may be affected and should think about taking steps to protect their health.
101 - 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Sensitive* people may be affected and should take steps to protect their health.
151 - 200	Unhealthy	Older adults and other sensitive groups should definitely take steps to protect their health. Others may also be affected.
201 - 300	Very Unhealthy	
301 - 500	Hazardous	

Potential Health Effects

Breathing in ozone or particulate matter can cause throat irritation, shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, chest pain, asthma attacks and the worsening of other health conditions. However, **you may not always have noticeable symptoms!**

* Who is “sensitive”?

Some people are more sensitive than others but older adults, children and many others with certain health conditions can be considered “sensitive.” **People with the conditions listed below** should be cautious when air quality is poor, even if they do not have symptoms.

- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Emphysema
- Asthma
- Heart Disease
- A previous heart attack
- A previous stroke
- Any other conditions affecting the lungs or heart.

The websites listed on the back panel have more detailed information.

How do I protect myself?

#1 -- Be Informed:

- Check the **air quality index** in the **weather section** of the **Wisconsin State Journal**.
- Check the **air quality index** online and sign up and visit the DNR or EPA websites to get e-mails or text message alerts.
- You can download apps to your smart phone that will let you track air quality. These apps can be found at the EPA or American Lung Association websites.

#2 -- When the air quality is poor, Take Action:

- If the **air quality index is orange**:
 - » Reduce physical exertion during your outdoor activities.
 - » Reduce the amount of time you spend outside.
- If the **air quality index is red or worse**: avoid all prolonged or heavy exertion.
- If you use an inhaler, keep it with you.
- When air quality is poor because of **ozone**, exercise indoors instead of outside.



For More Air Quality Information

- **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR)**
1-866-324-5924

www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/airquality

Call or go online for the daily **air quality index** and to sign up to receive alerts.

- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

www.airnow.gov

Go online for the daily **air quality index**, sign up to receive air quality alerts, or to download a smart phone app. In the “Quick Links” section at the bottom of the webpage, click on what you can do to learn more about helping keep the air clean.

- **American Lung Association**

1-800-586-4872

www.lung.org/healthy-air

Call to learn about lung health, or go online to read general air quality info or download a smart phone app.



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Outdoor Air Quality & Your Health:

Advice on Avoiding Health Problems from Air Pollution



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