

Air Pollution

Air quality affects the way you live and breathe. The Air Quality Index (AQI) measures air pollution. It is reported every day as a number between 0 and 500. The higher the number the more pollution is in the air. Large cities have more air pollution than smaller cities. AQI is reported in newspapers, on television and radio stations, or on the internet. AQI measures:

- Ozone
- Particles (solids and liquids droplets)
- Carbon Monoxide
- Sulfur Dioxide



Ozone is formed when pollution from cars, power plants, and other places reacts with sunlight. Ozone can irritate the lungs and cause coughing, sore throat or discomfort in the chest. It can cause lung function to drop and make breathing harder.



Particles in the air come from cars, industrial plants, burning wood and many other things. The small particles can cause coughing and shortness of breath when breathed into the lungs.



Carbon Monoxide is released into the air when carbon in fuel is not burned completely. It is colorless and odorless. It enters the bloodstream through the lungs and attaches to red blood cells. When carbon monoxide is on the red blood cell there is no room for oxygen. Low oxygen in the body causes shortness of breath and confusion.



Sulfur Dioxide is produced when coal or oil fuels are burned. The highest levels are near industrial plants. It can cause narrowing of the breathing tubes, wheezing, chest tightness and shortness of breath when breathed into the lungs.

If you have lung problems:

- **Limit time** outside working or exercising if the AQI is **over 100**.
- **Do not** exercise or work outside if the AQI is **over 200**.
- If you are extra sensitive to air pollution limit outdoor work or exercise if the AQI is between 50 and 100.
- Wear a mask if the air is “dusty”.
- Do not leave your car running in a garage or other covered place.
- Avoid driving in heavy traffic jams.
- Check the AQI in Ohio:

www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=airnow.fcsummary&stateid=41

