

Outdoor Air Quality and Adult Asthma

Poor air quality is unhealthy for everyone, but especially for **people with asthma**. Poor air quality can be a **trigger** for your asthma — and can make symptoms come on faster and stronger. When the Air Quality Report says that people in **sensitive groups** should take action, this includes people with asthma. Here’s how poor air quality can affect you:

NOW				LATER
Worse asthma symptoms	More severe respiratory infections	More missed work or school	More hospital visits	Permanent lung damage, higher risk of lung cancer and early death

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a number for reporting how clean or unhealthy your air is every day.

You can find it on the Internet at AirNow.gov. It’s also reported in local news sources:

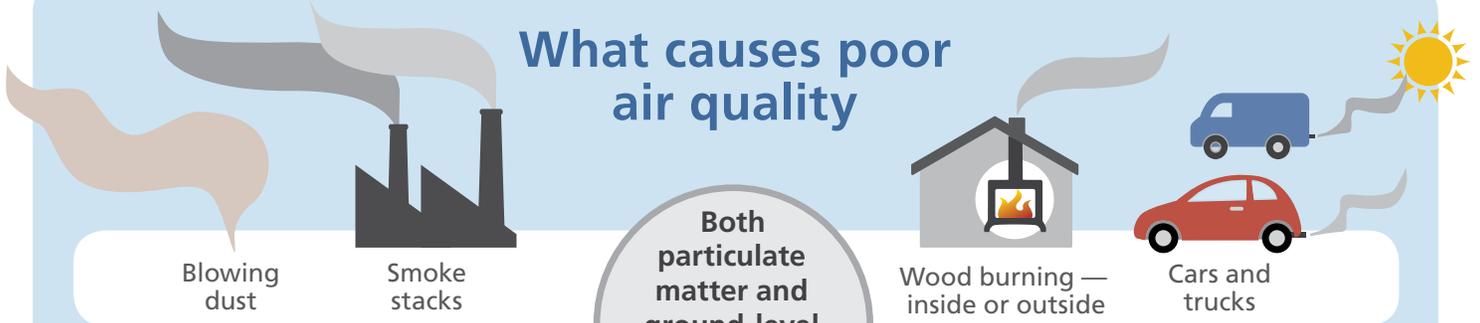


When AQI is:

A person with asthma should:

<p>1–50 GOOD</p>	<p>Enjoy usual outdoor activities</p>			
<p>51–100 MODERATE</p>	<p>Consider reducing outdoor exercise — not as long, not as hard If you have symptoms, stay indoors</p>			
<p>101–150 UNHEALTHY for sensitive groups</p>	<p>Reduce or avoid outdoor exercise</p>	<p>Plan necessary outdoor activities at times of day when air quality is better (usually morning)</p>	<p>Avoid exposure to outdoor air in places with a lot of traffic</p>	<p>Keep your fast-acting inhaler nearby (such as albuterol) — and contact your doctor if you’re using it often</p>
<p>151–200 UNHEALTHY</p>	<p>Avoid all outdoor exercise</p>			
<p>201–300 VERY UNHEALTHY</p>	<p>Avoid all outdoor exercise</p>			

What causes poor air quality



Blowing dust

Smoke stacks

Both particulate matter and ground-level ozone make asthma worse

Wood burning — inside or outside

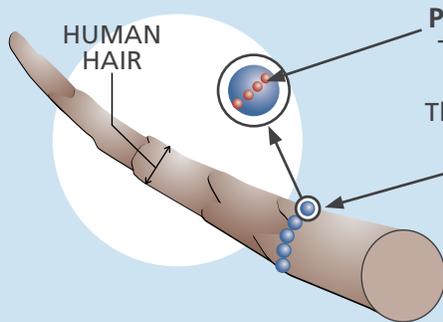
Cars and trucks

Particulate matter is tiny particles in the air like dust, dirt, soot, and smoke. In northern Utah, it's more common and more problematic in winter months. Symptoms may come several hours after exposure.

Ground-level ozone forms when polluted air comes in contact with heat and sunlight. This is more common in summer months and late in the day. Symptoms usually come right away.

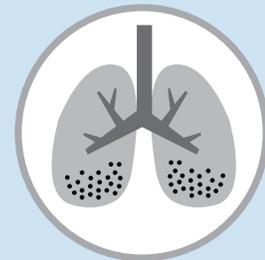
Particulate matter in your lungs

Particulate matter is sometimes reported as PM 2.5 or PM 10



PM 2.5 particles are extremely tiny. They can get deep into your lungs and cause inflammation. This makes breathing more difficult.

PM 10 particles are a bit bigger. They include things like dust, pollen, and mold. Your nose and airways can filter some of these before they reach your lungs.



Take action



Ask your doctor to add air quality to your *Asthma Action Plan*. Ask about when to adjust your controller medications.



Listen to your body
Get to know your own responses at different AQI levels — and when you need to change your plans.



Get to know your neighborhood
Pay attention to places and times of day where air quality affects you most.



Learn more
Get more information about what you can do to help improve air quality — both outdoors and in your home.

Utah Clean Air
UCAIR.org
AirNow.gov
EPA.gov/
airquality