

Outdoor Air Quality and Stroke

Poor air quality is unhealthy for everyone, but especially for **older adults** and **people at risk for stroke**. If you have had a stroke in the past, poor air quality can make you more likely to have another one.

For people at risk for stroke, poor air quality can cause:

NOW			LONG TERM
			
Stroke	Heart attack	More hospital and emergency visits	Greater risk of stroke, blood clots, heart attack, 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 at risk for stroke should:

<p>1-50 GOOD</p>	<p> Enjoy usual outdoor activities </p>	<p> Always take your medicines as prescribed by your doctor, especially when air quality is unhealthy</p>	<p> Traffic pollution is harmful even when AQI is good</p> <p>Whenever possible, avoid outdoor air in places with a lot of traffic</p>
<p>51-100 MODERATE</p>	<p> Reduce outdoor exercise—not as long, not as hard. If you have symptoms, stay indoors</p>		
<p>101-150 UNHEALTHY for sensitive groups</p>	<p> Plan outdoor activities in the morning, when air quality is usually better</p> <p> Exercise indoors</p>		
<p>151-200 UNHEALTHY</p>	<p> If you have a sudden problem with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance • Eyes • Face drooping • Arm weakness • Speech <p>Get emergency help immediately</p>		
<p>201-300 VERY UNHEALTHY</p>			

What causes poor air quality?



Smoke stacks

Wood burning — inside or outside

Cars and trucks

Blowing dust

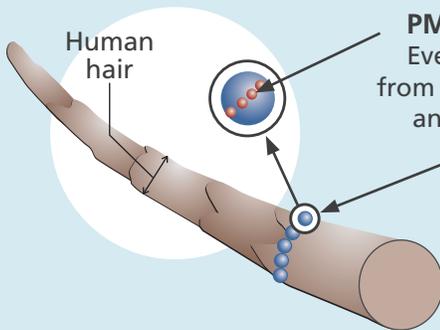
Both particulate matter and ground-level ozone increase risk of stroke

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

Ground-level ozone is a colorless gas. It 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 and stroke

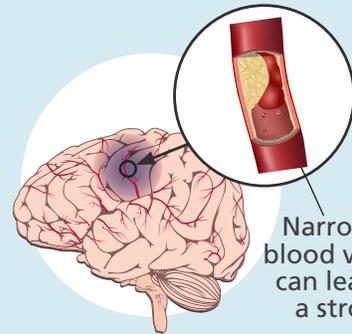
Particulate matter is sometimes reported as PM 2.5 or PM 10



Human hair

PM 2.5 particles are extremely tiny. Even a face mask won't protect you from them. They can get into your blood and cause blood vessels to narrow.

PM 10 particles are a bit bigger. They include things like dust and pollen. Your nose and airways can filter some of these.



Narrowed blood vessels can lead to a stroke

More ways to take action



Pay attention to the air in your home

Be sure indoor air is free of smoke and chemical fumes. Ask your doctor if you should get an air filter.



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 how you can help improve air quality — both outdoors and in your home.

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