Outdoor Air Quality in Summer

In summer, the biggest cause of poor air quality is **ozone.** Ozone is a gas that can be helpful when it's high above the earth. But **ozone at ground level is harmful.** Here's how ground-level ozone can affect your health:

NOW

Chest tightness, shortness of breath

Pain or burning with deep breath

Coughing, irritated throat

Worse allergy symptoms

LATER

Repeated or ongoing exposure can lead to:

- Asthma
- Reduced lung function
- Permanent lung damage

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:

People sensitive to ozone should:

(These include children, older adults, people with asthma or other lung diseases, and people working or exercising outdoors)

1–50 GOOD

Enjoy usual outdoor activities

51–100 MODERATE

Consider reducing outdoor exercise — not as long, not as hard, not in afternoon

101–150 UNHEALTHY for sensitive groups

151–200 UNHEALTHY for all

201–300 VERY UNHEALTHY for all

Reduce or avoid outdoor exercise

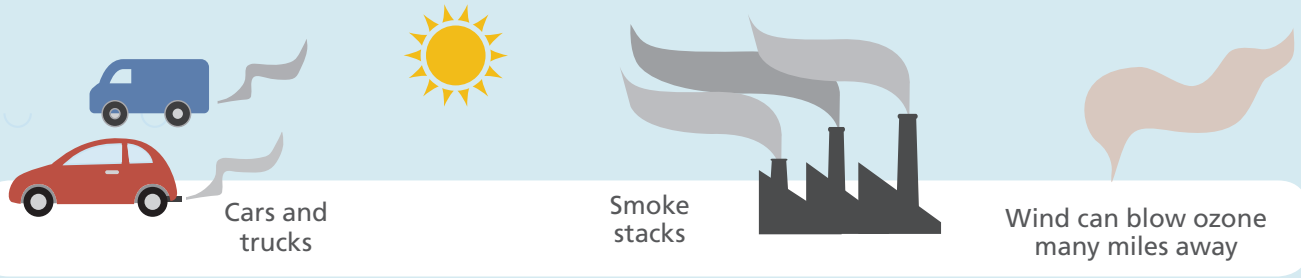
Avoid all outdoor exercise

Plan outdoor activities and exercise in the morning, when ozone levels are usually lower

Traffic pollution is harmful even when AQI is good

Whenever possible, don't exercise outdoors in places with a lot of traffic

What causes ozone pollution?



Ground-level ozone is a gas that forms when polluted air comes in contact with heat and sunlight. It comes from many sources, including cars and trucks, and smoke from industry.

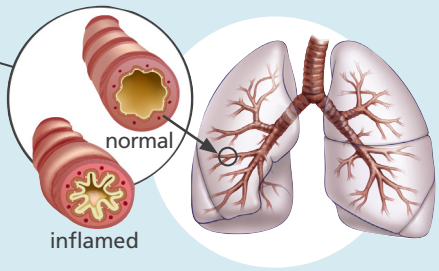
In most places ozone is highest in summer months and late in the afternoon. In high elevations and in places with heavy industries, ozone levels can be high in winter, too.

Even if you don't live near sources of ozone, you need to be careful. It can blow your way in the wind.

Ozone and your lungs

Inflammation in your lungs narrows your airways and makes breathing difficult

Your brain also tries to stop you from breathing in deeply, causing shortness of breath



You might not feel any symptoms. Ozone can be hurting your lungs even if you don't feel symptoms. Pay attention to the AQI level so you can protect yourself.

Take action

Listen to your body
Response to ozone varies a lot from person to person. 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/
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