

# AIR POLLUTION Facts & Tips

## HOW AIR POLLUTION AFFECTS OUR HEALTH

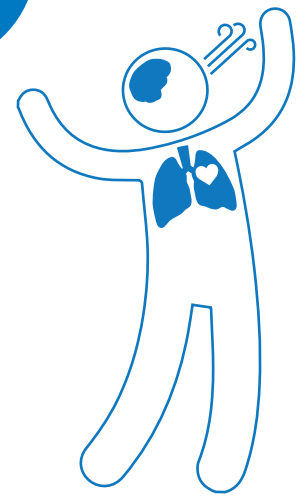
Air does not always look dirty when it is polluted. Sometimes, people can feel pollution they can't see: headaches, coughing and wheezing can be caused by pollution. Breathing in air pollution can trigger asthma, allergies, heart attacks and strokes. When people breathe polluted air for a long period of time, it can cause harm that shows up later in life, such as cancer or problems with thinking and remembering.

Air pollution causes the most harm to babies and young children. Breathing in pollution can stop lungs from reaching full size. It can make it harder for kids to think and learn.

When air pollution makes people sick, it can cause other problems, too. Being sick makes it hard for kids to do well in school. Adults can miss work days. It also can mean more doctor's bills, hospital stays and the cost of medicine or other treatment.



Clean air is important for good health. When air is dirty, it can cause harm to the lungs, heart and brain.



Air pollution in Oregon comes from many sources, including tailpipes on traffic and construction equipment, and smokestacks on factories, and chimneys on homes.

## MAJOR SOURCES OF AIR POLLUTION

Wildfires and farming practices also create pollution. We also breathe air pollution from daily activities such as cooking, cleaning, dusting, driving, heating homes, or even burning candles and incense.

We know, based on national studies, that diesel exhaust, wood smoke, and toxic pollutants from industry are serious air pollution problems across Oregon. Neighborhoods have different air pollution problems based on the traffic and industry nearby, and the number of homes burning wood for heat.

## AIR POLLUTION IN OREGON

Oregon has a network of monitors that check for some kinds of pollution. When it's a "bad air day," it usually means that smog (ozone) or soot (PM 2.5) is bad enough to cause health harm across large areas of the city or county. These alerts are important, but they do not give people information about air pollution that may be worse in some neighborhoods because of construction, industry or traffic.



### WHAT CAN YOU DO

You can take some steps to protect yourself and your family from air pollution. Pollution is made of gases and tiny particles (soot). Different protections are used to control different kinds of pollution.

One of the most dangerous and common kinds of pollution is soot, or PM 2.5. These particles come from burning wood or fuel. They are so small they can't be seen. These particles can travel deep into your lungs and then into your bloodstream. These particles can also travel through face masks.

Oregon needs stronger regulation of air pollution from diesel engines, wood burning and industries near neighborhoods in order to protect health.

### ABOUT FACE MASKS

If you have asthma, breathing problems or heart disease, consider using a respirator mask outdoors when there is smoke in the air.

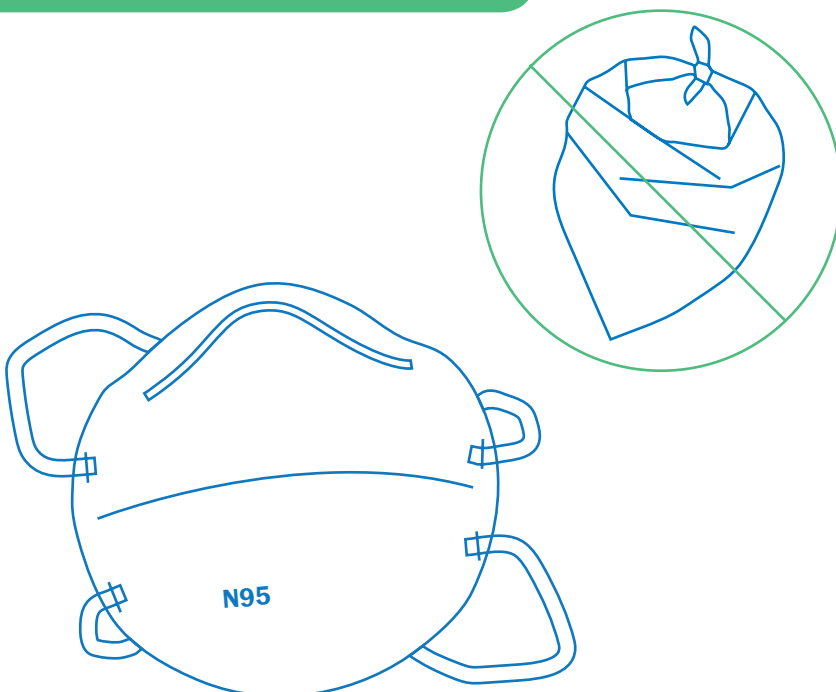
Look for a **mask called N95 or N100** to trap the dangerous particles.

Choose a mask that has two straps that go around your head and fits over your nose and under your chin.

Children will need special masks designed to fit their smaller size.

If you have heart and lung problems and the mask is uncomfortable or makes it hard to breathe, check with your doctor about whether to use it.

**Bandanas and surgical masks will not work** to protect you from dangerous particles.

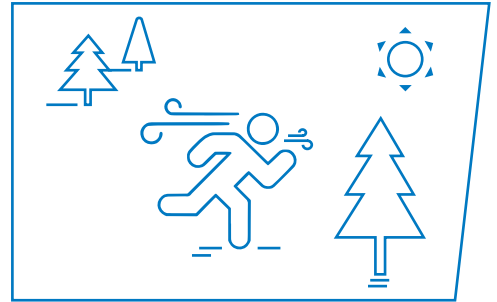


## PROTECT YOUR HEALTH OUTSIDE

Check for daily air pollution at [airnow.gov](http://airnow.gov).

Avoid exercising outdoors on days with bad air quality.

Avoid exercising near heavy traffic.



## PROTECT YOUR HEALTH INSIDE

Dust regularly with a cloth wet with water.

Use the fans in your kitchen and bathroom to get air flowing.

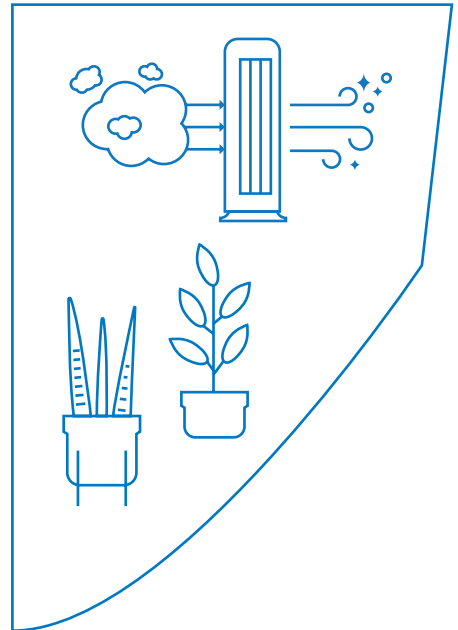
Run a window air conditioner with a clean filter and the fresh air intake closed to get air flowing without drawing in outdoor pollution.

Replace furnace filters on time.

Take off your shoes when you walk inside to keep from tracking in pollution.

Buy house plants to help keep indoor air clean.

Use a High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter air cleaner matched to the size of the room. Do not use an ozone generator.



## REDUCE YOUR POLLUTION

Bike, walk or take the bus instead of driving.

When driving, turn off your engine if stopped out of traffic for more than 10 seconds.

On bad air days, fuel your car in the evening when the sun is less intense.

Especially on bad air days, avoid using gas-powered lawn mowers.

Try green cleaning recipes using vinegar, baking soda and plain soap.

Retire or replace wood-burning stoves.

Avoid using aerosol sprays. Use pump bottles instead.

Avoid storing paint thinner, paint and other maintenance materials indoors. Choose "Low VOC" paint.

Especially on bad air days, avoid smoking, wood stoves and fires, candles, incense, and frying or broiling food.

## MORE YOU CAN DO

**Get involved** with a local community group working on air quality issues.

