

WHERE DOES OZONE COME FROM?

Ground-level ozone is formed when two types of pollutants – nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) - react in the presence of sunlight. They are found in emissions from:

- Car trucks, and buses
- Lawn Equipment, construction equipment, trains, and aircraft
- Small source like gas stations and water heater
- Consumer products, including some paints and cleaners

WHAT CAN I DO TO REDUCE AIR POLLUTION?

There are many actions that people can take to reduce air pollution:

- Drive Less
- Limit Idling
- Maintain your Vehicle
- Conserve electricity, gas, and water
- Buy or using clean vehicles and equipment
- Volunteer in your community to increase awareness

You can find more air pollution reduction tips at AirCentralTexas.org.



AirCentralTexas.org

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AIR CENTRAL TEXAS

Air Pollution and Aging



Be Air Aware



AIR POLLUTION IN CENTRAL TEXAS AND AGING

Air pollution can impair the health of people, animals, and plants, and lead to other problems such as reduced visibility and unpleasant odors. There are a number of contaminants in our air, however, the pollutant that Central Texas faces the biggest challenge with is ground-level ozone, since its levels sometimes get high enough to be considered “unhealthy for sensitive groups,” including the roughly 200,000 older adults who live in Central Texas.

HOW DOES GROUND LEVEL OZONE AFFECT HEALTH?

Ground-Level Ozone can:

- Make your lungs more susceptible to infection
- Trigger asthma attacks
- Worsen bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma
- Inflammation and damage the lung lining
- Cause shortness of breath and pain when taking a deep breath

These effects may impair your enjoyment of outdoor activities on high ozone days and lead to increased visits to the doctor and emergency room. Some research also indicates that high ozone exposure can increase the risk of premature death. Since older adults are more likely to experience other health issues already, they can be more vulnerable to high ozone pollution than younger adults.

HOW CAN I LEARN ABOUT HOW POLLUTED THE AIR IS?

The best way to know whether air pollution levels are expected to be low, moderate, or unhealthy for sensitive groups, is to keep track of the Air Quality Index (AQI). Local weather forecasters will often let you know what the day’s AQI forecast is, and this can help you decide what if any actions you might consider to protect yourself from high ozone. You can look up AQI forecasts online at www.AirCentralTexas.org or at www.AirNow.gov.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MYSELF FROM AIR POLLUTION?

If there is an Ozone Action Day or an “orange” AQI forecast:

- Reduce prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion
- Take more breaks
- Do less intense activities
- Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath
- Schedule outdoor activities in the morning when ozone is lower
- If you have asthma, follow your asthma action plan and keep relief medicine handy

If there is a yellow AQI forecast, consider following the steps described above if you are particularly sensitive to air pollution.



AIR QUALITY INDEX

Air Quality Index (AQI) Values	Levels of Health Concern
0 to 50	Good
51-100	Moderate
101-150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups
151-200	Unhealthy
201-300	Very Unhealthy
301 to 500	Hazardous