



National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration



Ozone can be beneficial or harmful, depending upon where it is located in the atmosphere. Ozone is found in both the troposphere and the stratosphere. In the troposphere (the layer of atmosphere closest to the ground that extends to an average altitude of 12 km or 7.5 miles), ozone is a pollutant and is harmful to the health of all living systems (plants, animals, and humans.) It is a major constituent of smog.

In the stratosphere (between approximately 12 and 50 km above the surface) is the ozone layer, which blocks out the biologically damaging solar ultraviolet radiation. With a thinning of the ozone layer, there could be an increase in the number of cases of skin cancer and cataracts.

For more information about ozone and the atmosphere in general, see the following web sites:

[www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov)

[www.nasa.gov/centers/langley/science/  
Science\\_Directorate.html](http://www.nasa.gov/centers/langley/science/Science_Directorate.html)

[haloedata.larc.nasa.gov/home/index.php](http://haloedata.larc.nasa.gov/home/index.php)

[www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov)

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