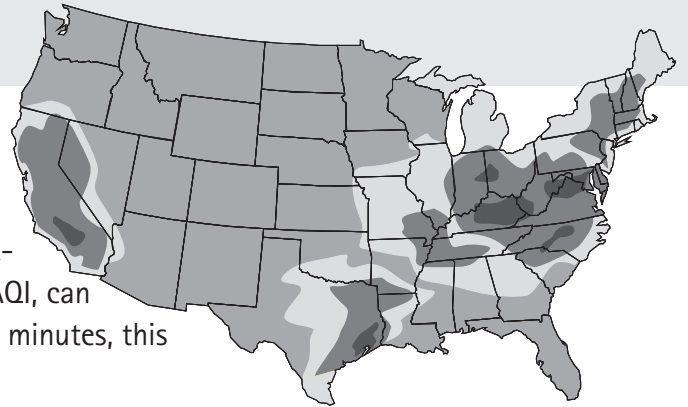


The AQI: Your Forecast to Breathe By

You probably check your local weather forecast every day, but there's another forecast out there you should be checking, too. This forecast, known as the Air Quality Index, or AQI, can help you plan your activities to protect your health. In just minutes, this important tool lets you know:



- What today's and tomorrow's air pollution levels are forecast to be in your community.
- Who's at risk from air pollution.
- Simple steps you can take to protect your health.

How can air pollution affect my health?

- About 160 million Americans—over half the U.S. population—are exposed to unhealthy levels of ground-level ozone or particle pollution every year.
- Breathing ground-level ozone and particle pollution can cause serious health effects. Ozone pollution can cause respiratory symptoms and premature aging of the lungs. Particle pollution can cause bronchitis, heart problems, and even premature death due to heart or lung disease. Both ozone and particle pollution can aggravate asthma.
- Some people are at greater risk from breathing ozone pollution or particle pollution. Sensitive groups for ozone pollution include active children and adults, and people with lung disease. Sensitive groups for particle pollution include people with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children.

What can I do to protect my health?

- You can reduce your exposure to air pollution by using AQI forecasts to plan your day. When the AQI predicts unhealthy air pollution levels, take it easier. By doing so, you will take less polluted air into your lungs. Choose a less vigorous activity (walk instead of jog, for example) or spend less time doing it. Or, reschedule your activities for times when air quality is expected to be better.

