




Outdoor Air Quality and Heart Disease

Poor air quality is unhealthy for everyone, but especially for **people with heart disease** — such as **heart failure** or **coronary artery disease**. The recommendations below relate to **where and when** you exercise. Follow the recommendations related to your specific health condition for **how much** you exercise. For people with heart disease, poor air quality can cause:

NOW				LATER
				
Shortness of breath	Chest pain	Heart attack	More hospital and emergency visits	Greater risk of heart attack, stroke, blood clots, and early death









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:

A person with heart disease should:

<p>1–50 GOOD</p>	 <p>Enjoy usual outdoor activities</p> 	 <p>Always take your medicines as prescribed by your doctor, especially when air quality is unhealthy</p>	 <p>Traffic pollution is harmful even when AQI is good</p> <p>Whenever possible, avoid outdoor air in places with a lot of traffic</p>
<p>51–100 MODERATE</p>	 <p>Take it easy outdoors</p>	 <p>Exercise indoors</p>	 <p>If you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pain or tightness in the chest, arms, neck, back, or jaw • palpitations • shortness of breath • unusual tiredness <p>Call your doctor and don't exercise</p>
<p>101–150 UNHEALTHY for sensitive groups</p>	 <p>Plan outdoor activities in the morning, when air quality is usually better</p>		
<p>151–200 UNHEALTHY for all</p>			
<p>201–300 VERY UNHEALTHY for all</p>			

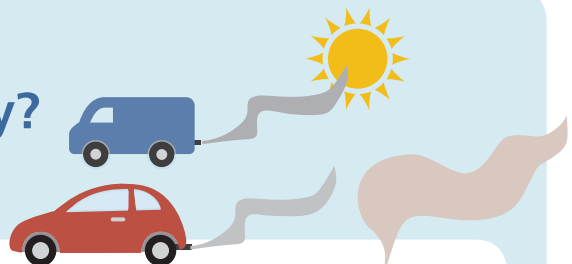
What causes poor air quality?



Smoke stacks



Wood burning — inside or outside



Cars and trucks

Blowing dust

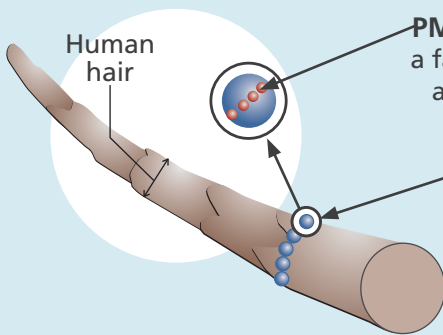
If you have heart disease, particulate matter is the biggest risk

Particulate matter is tiny particles in the air like dust, dirt, soot, and smoke. In northern Utah, it's more common and more problematic in winter months. Symptoms may come several hours after exposure.

Carbon monoxide is a gas that comes from the exhaust of cars and trucks. It reduces the amount of oxygen that can get to your heart and other organs. Carbon monoxide is usually worse in cold weather.

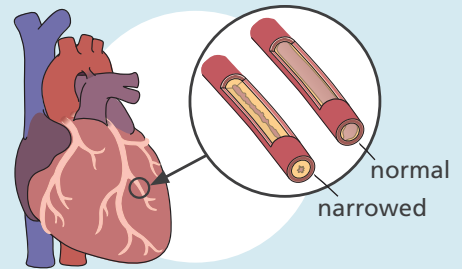
Particulate matter and your heart

Particulate matter is sometimes reported as **PM 2.5** or **PM 10**



PM 2.5 particles are extremely tiny. Even a face mask won't keep them out of your airways. They can get into your blood and cause blood vessels to narrow.

PM 10 particles are a bit bigger. They include things like dust and pollen. Your nose and airways can filter some of these before they reach your heart or lungs.



Narrowed blood vessels cause serious health problems

More ways to take action



Pay attention to the air in your home

Be sure indoor air is free of smoke and chemical fumes. Ask your doctor if you should get an air filter.



Listen to your body

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/
airquality