

Introducing the Air Quality Health Index

The average person takes about 20,000 breaths a day. That's an amazing 10,000 litres of air that pass through your lungs every day! Wouldn't it be helpful to know how all that air affects your health – and when it's best to be active? Now you can.

The Air Quality Health Index is a new tool that measures air quality in terms of your health.

From 1 to 10

The Air Quality Health Index is simple. It measures air quality in relation to your health on a scale from 1 to 10. A reading of 1 represents a low risk to your health and 7 or greater represents a high risk. (On rare occasions, the Air Quality Health Index may be 10+, which means a very high risk.)

More than a Number

The Air Quality Health Index is more than just a number – it's a tool that helps you plan a healthy day. Since strenuous activities increase the amount of air you breathe, the Air Quality Health Index can help you decide when to enjoy the benefits of physical activity and when to reduce or reschedule your activity.



Low Risk 1-3

At Risk Population*

Enjoy your usual outdoor activities.

General Population

Ideal air quality for outdoor activities.

**People with heart or breathing problems are at greater risk. Follow your doctor's usual advice about exercising and managing your condition.*



Moderate Risk 4-6

At Risk Population*

Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you are experiencing symptoms.

General Population

No need to modify your usual outdoor activities unless you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.

Additional information can be found at www.airhealth.ca



High Risk 7-10

At Risk Population*

Reduce or reschedule strenuous activities outdoors. Children and the elderly should also take it easy.

General Population

Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.

When the Air Quality Health Index is above 10, children, the elderly and those with heart or breathing problems should avoid strenuous activities outdoors. Everyone should reduce or reschedule physical activities outdoors.

Everyone is Unique

The Air Quality Health Index also recognizes that air quality affects everyone in different ways. For example, a reading of 5 would have a different meaning to those with heart or breathing problems than those who don't. For this reason, the Air Quality Health Index includes recommendations for people at risk and the general population. As you use the Air Quality Health Index daily, you will learn how the different numbers affect you and what actions you can take to protect yourself. For example, if you like to jog, you may discover that you prefer a stroll in the park when the Air Quality Health Index reaches 7 or higher.

Make a Habit of It

Check the Air Quality Health Index every day. Some media outlets (e.g. TV, radio, newspaper) are including the Air Quality Health Index in their weather reports. You can also get more information about the Index and your local reading at www.airhealth.ca. Information is updated hourly and a forecast is also provided for the next day.

Protecting Health and the Environment

While the Air Quality Health Index can help to protect our health, it also serves as a reminder of the need to protect our environment. Imagine how poor air quality can affect the life of a child with asthma, the elderly, or someone with a heart or breathing problem. If everyone were to reduce energy use, we could reduce the number of days when the Air Quality Health Index is high.

20/20 The Way to Clean Air is a campaign designed to help you reduce home energy use and vehicle use by 20%. It's easier than you think. Call 416-392-2020 (or 1-866-583-2020) to get a copy of the 20/20 Planner, a free energy-reducing guide. Better yet, download the 20/20 Planner at www.cleanairpartnership.org/2020.

More Information

To find out more about the Air Quality Health Index, and to start using this tool, visit:

www.airhealth.ca

Protect your health. Know the numbers.

www.airhealth.ca



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