

*Scientific Study*

# Is Air Dangerous to Health?

**“Particulate matter air pollution is the 13th leading cause of mortality.”**

Breathing air is a necessity of life. We cannot live without air. But new research from the University of Michigan shows that a breath of fresh air comes at the price of increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

Particulate matter air pollution is the 13th leading cause of mortality. Air pollution has been associated with numerous cardiovascular diseases, heart failure, and stroke.

The air we breathe is polluted by industry and with each breath of air, we also inhale many pollutants. Air pollution contains a mixture of toxic gases, liquids and particulate matter.

The human health effects and toxicity of air pollution are determined by ambient concentration, pollution source, and chemical composition. Inhaling particulate matter from polluted air causes systemic inflammation, oxidative stress, alterations in autonomic balance, and alterations of circulation.

Children are at increased risk due to their higher rate of respiration and smaller body size. Athletes, who train outdoors, such as runners and cyclists, are also at higher risk due to their increased rate of respiration

during training.

While staying indoors may seem the answer, indoor air is generally much more polluted than outdoor air.

Indoor air is typically contaminated with flame retardants, formaldehyde, and carcinogenic chemicals from air freshener, fragrances, furnishings, cleaning products, carpeting, and laundry products.

The only way to reduce exposure to air pollution is to stop polluting the air. This begins at home with the elimination of fragranced products and chemical cleaning agents. There are many unscented and food based alternatives that work just as well.

Beyond the home, people can decline to purchase products for which the manufacture produces high amounts of pollution. A demand for safer and environmentally friendly products will create a paradigm shift to a new market which prefers these products.

In addition, politicians can be petitioned to enact laws mandating reduced pollution, elimination of flame retardants, and labeling of all ingredients and treatment used on products during manufacture and sale.

**Reference**

Brook, RD. Cardiovascular effects of air pollution. Clin Sci (Lond). 2008 Sep;115(6):175-87.

