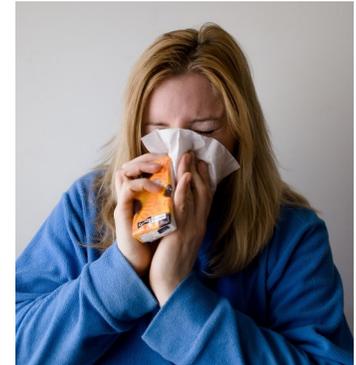




Why should we care about Ozone and Particulate Matter?

Ozone has many long and short term health effects. On days where there are high levels of ozone, effects can be felt almost immediately. They can be felt in the form of coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, pulmonary inflammation, and asthma attacks. Venturing into the long term effects of ozone, it is evident that the conditions get more serious. People exposed to high amounts of surface ozone for over eight hours in their lifetime are at an increased risk for developing frequent respiratory infections and lung diseases, lung cancer, and even death. Being exposed to high levels of ozone can put people at a higher risk for having a heart attack or stroke as well as increasing the risk of premature death. Pregnant women exposed to ozone can also cause their newborn children to have decreased lung function.

Source: American Lung Association



Particulate matter shares much of the same health risks as ozone. Being exposed to high levels of PM, even if for a short time, can cause many health complications. Like ozone, PM can lead to respiratory problems and illnesses, and cardiovascular issues. Where PM differs from ozone is that it can physically damage the respiratory system. The small particles can scratch and damage airways in the lungs causing a decrease in lung efficiency. Another major difference in health effects from ozone is the time scale on which it acts. PM can be extremely dangerous even if a person is exposed to high levels of it for a short period of time. Fatalities from PM can happen within hours or days or months of being exposed to high levels. Being exposed to PM can shorten a person's life by one to three years.

Source: American Lung Association

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