



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Warning: Breathing today may shorten your life

Poor air quality throughout New England threatens lung health

Even though the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says that the air we are breathing today in New England is moderate, did you know that their own scientists say it is unhealthy?

The American Lung Association of New England is warning the public that the air we are breathing today is unhealthy – even more unhealthy than the U.S. EPA says. EPA's Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee says that EPA's air quality standards are not strict enough. The air quality that is rated "moderate" is actually "unhealthy." On a day like today, the public should take precautions.

Everyone should limit strenuous outdoor activity to the early morning hours. Those with chronic lung disease, children and the elderly are at high risk and should remain indoors.

Air quality today can cause a "sunburn" to the lungs. Ozone acts as an irritant to the lungs by attacking lung tissue. Symptoms include shortness of breath, chest pain when inhaling deeply, wheezing and coughing.

Ground level ozone, or smog, forms during the warm weather when pollution from sources such as vehicles, industry, households and power plants bake in the hot sun. When unhealthy air is predicted, everyone should take action to reduce the threat.

- Combine car trips and carpool.

- Fill up gas tanks after dusk to cut down on gas vapors getting into the air.
- Maintain your car to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Use mass transit.
- Use electric rather than gas-powered lawn equipment.
- Help reduce emissions from power plants by turning air conditioners to a higher temperature and turning off lights, computer screens and other electrical appliances.
- Support adoption and enforcement of strict air quality control policies.

Visit the American Lung Association of New England's OwnYourAir.org website or call 1-800-LUNG-USA.

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