



Prescriptions for PREVENTION

Guidance from the Western States
Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit



Outdoor Air Pollution



Did you know?

Outdoor air pollution exposure is associated with health issues such as asthma, heart disease, and cancer. Air pollution exposure during childhood may negatively impact the brain. Highways, ports, power plants, refineries, factories, wildfires, and volcanoes, are major sources of pollution. Some communities, such as low-income communities and communities of color, are more impacted by air pollution than others.



Do

- Check the EPA's [AirNow.gov](https://www.airnow.gov) for guidance on outdoor activities.
- Consider wearing a [N95 mask](#) when the air quality is unhealthy. NIOSH certified N95 masks are the best option.
- Create a [clean indoor air space](#) that your family can use when air pollution is unhealthy.
- [See our indoor air factsheet here](#)

To help improve outdoor air quality:

- Drive less! Walk, carpool, bike, or use public transport if available;
- Choose energy-efficient appliances and light bulbs;
- Limit the use of gasoline-powered lawn mowers and leaf blowers. Invest in electric alternatives if possible.



Don't

- Don't rely solely on masks. Use your clean indoor air space as needed.
- Don't leave doors and windows open on severe air pollution days.
- Don't idle your car unnecessarily.
- [Don't burn wood or other materials in your fireplace or stove.](#) Consider using space heaters or converting to a gas fireplace if needed.
- Make sure to avoid burning anything on Spare the Air Days, often noted on: [www.AirNow.gov](https://www.airnow.gov).



For more information, scan the code or visit

<https://wspehsu.ucsf.edu/curriculum-tools/prescriptions-for-prevention/>

Material developed in partnership with the Environmental Research and Translation for Health (EaRTH) Center: <https://earth.ucsf.edu>