

Date: 2023-06-06

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

Re: Special Air Quality Statement in Effect – Current Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) at high risk in eastern Ontario

A Special Air Quality Statement has been issued for the eastern Ontario region, including Cornwall and the counties of SD&G and Prescott-Russell. When the outdoor [air quality health reaches level 7 or higher](#) (high to very high risk level) on the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI), you should take precautions for yourself and those you care for.

Precautions to protect yourself and those you care for

When the air quality is poor, everyone is at risk, however health risks are greater for: older adults, infants and young children, people with chronic illnesses, people who work in the heat, people who exercise in the heat, people experiencing homelessness and low-income earners.

- Infants, young children, the elderly, people with heart or breathing problems, and other people at risk should stay indoors. Exposure to air pollution is particularly a concern for children, the elderly, and those who have underlying medical conditions such as lung or heart disease.
- Stay inside if you have breathing difficulties. Find an indoor place that's cool and ventilated. Using an air conditioner that cools and filters air may help. If you open the windows you may let in more polluted air. If your home isn't air-conditioned, consider going to a public place (library, shopping mall, recreation centre) that is air conditioned.
- Avoid strenuous activities. When outdoors, if your breathing becomes difficult or uncomfortable, stop or reduce strenuous physical activities. If you experience irritation of the eyes, nose or throat, shortness of breath or other respiratory symptoms, you should take action to reduce your exposure to outdoor air pollution.
- Stay away from areas with automobile traffic and limit the amount of time you spend in areas where pollution can be elevated, like busy streets during rush hour and industrial zones, especially when you exercise.
- Have an adequate supply of medication (more than 5 days) and develop a plan together with your health care provider for how to manage your condition during periods of poor air quality.

For more information:

- [Air Quality Health Index \(AQHI\): Observations and Forecasts](#)
- [AQHI Categories and Health Messages](#)
- [Health Risks of Air Pollution](#)
- [EOHU: Outdoor Air Quality](#)

If you require this information in an alternate format, please call 1 800 267-7120 and press 0.

