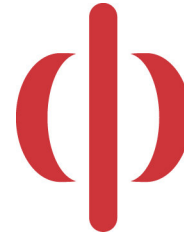


SMOGEN



**RESPIRATORY
HEALTH
ASSOCIATIONSM**
of Metropolitan Chicago

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Rising ozone levels threaten Chicago

As the mercury heads into the 90's this week, many Chicagoans may find themselves hitting the beaches or pools to beat the heat. But with air pollution levels also rising, summertime also means increased damage to your lungs.

The Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago (RHAMC) warns that as temperatures and humidity rise, levels of ozone smog and fine particulate matter (soot) also increase health problems. Children, seniors and those with heart and lung conditions are most affected, but even healthy adults can have difficulty breathing.

"Because it takes sunshine and heat to produce smog, levels will be increasing throughout the summer months. During this season, we want you to be aware of the outdoor air you're breathing, and take necessary precautions to protect yourself from any breathing problems high smog levels can cause," said Brian Urbaszewski, Director of Environmental Health for RHAMC.

Ozone, a main ingredient in smog, is a caustic gas that is a form of oxygen, and is made when sunshine reacts with pollution emitted by cars, trucks, and power plants.

Ozone harms internal body tissues, chemically burning the insides of your lungs. Smog can cause both short and long-term health effects even in healthy adults including shortness of breath, painful breathing and wheezing and coughing. Over time repeated exposure to ozone may lead to reductions in lung function, inflammation of the lung lining, and increased respiratory discomfort.

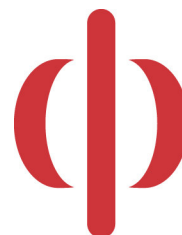
"Taking a few extra precautions during smog season is critical," said Urbaszewski. "Information about our smog level is available every day through the air quality index, or AQI, which uses a color-coded system and specific health advisories based on smog levels. Pay special attention when we hit an orange, a red or especially a purple day on the AQI; this is when people are at risk from air pollution."

Respiratory Health Association created Smog Alerts to warn people of days when air quality reaches unhealthy levels. To receive an e-mail when AQI days reach dangerous levels of orange or higher, visit www.lungchicago.org and sign up for Smog Alerts. To protect yourself from ozone and to help keep ozone levels down, RHAMC has these suggestions:

Chicago's Lung Health
Leader Since 1906

1440 W. Washington Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60607-1878
Phone: (312) 243-2000
Fax: (312) 243-3954
www.lungchicago.org

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- If you or family members are in sensitive populations (i.e., the young, elderly and those with chronic lung disease (such as asthma or COPD), take extra steps during ozone season to protect yourselves.
- On AQI orange days, red days, and purple days people with lung disease should not exercise outdoors. No one should exercise outdoors on red or purple days.
- Put off using your lawnmower or outdoor grill when smog levels are high.
- Fill up your gas tank after sundown, or delay till a cooler day.
- Limit trips in your car; carpool and combine trips whenever possible. Try walking or biking for short trips.
- Limit use of outdoor gasoline-powered equipment when smog levels are high.
- Support strong pollution control laws—at the local, state and national level.

Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago (RHAMC) has been a local public health leader since 1906. Today the Association fights lung disease and promotes healthy lungs by supporting research, advocacy, and educational efforts on behalf of individuals and families affected by lung cancer, asthma, COPD (chronic bronchitis and emphysema), and other lung diseases. For more information, visit www.lungchicago.org.

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