

State of the Air: 2007

Fact Sheet

Ozone (smog) levels improved across the U.S., but an ominous trend in the East reflects climbing levels of particle pollution (soot), the deadliest pollutant. In the West, however, stricter local and state control efforts are resulting in less soot.

Air Pollution & the General Population

Here are the facts about the growing number of Americans who are breathing unhealthy levels of ozone and particle pollution:

- Nearly half (46%) of the U.S. population lives in counties that have unhealthful levels of either ozone or particle pollution.
- One-third (33.4%) of the U.S. population lives in areas with unhealthful levels of ozone, a significant reduction since the last report, when nearly half did.
- Roughly one in three people (93.7 million) in the U.S. lives in an area with unhealthful short-term levels of particle pollution, a significant increase since the last report.
- Nearly one in five people in the United States live in areas with unhealthful year-round levels of particle pollution, which is nearly constant with the last report.
- About 38.3 million Americans, or nearly one in 8 people, live in 32 counties with unhealthful levels of all three types of air pollutants: ozone, and short-term and year-round particle pollution.

Air Pollution & High-Risk Groups

Many groups of people are at increased risk when exposed to air pollution because of their age or because they suffer from chronic lung or cardiovascular disease. Recent research has added people with diabetes to the high-risk category because exposure to particle pollution can affect their cardiovascular systems. High-risk groups include:

- **Adults age 65 and older**
- **Children under age 18**
- **Adults and children with asthma**
- **People with chronic bronchitis or emphysema (also known as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, or COPD)**
- **People with any other chronic lung disease***
- **People with cardiovascular disease**
- **People with diabetes**

* Estimates for this group not available in the *State of the Air: 2007* report