Air Pollution and Health

Reducing personal exposure: Outside the home

- Where possible use active travel to commute- by walking and cycling
- Try to avoid hotspots like busy roads
- When outdoors, where possible, walk at least a 1m from the curb. It has been quoted that a 30% reduction to exposure can occur by walking on the building side of the pavement vs road side
- When waiting to cross the road stand back from the kerb
- Enable access to air quality alerts: Airtext, CityAir App, LondonAir app
- Harmful gases from exhausts pass straight through car air filters and accumulate in car cabins, which sometimes can make it more harmful to be inside a car than on the street! Set your air to recirculate when in tunnels or traffic to avoid the worst exposure

Resources:

Air quality alerts: https://www.airtext.info/

The CityAir app - the healthiest way around London: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.ac.kcl.erg.cityair&hl=en_GB&gl=US

Current pollution levels across London: https://www.londonair.org.uk/LondonAir/Default.aspx

Air Pollution Guide: https://www.londonair.org.uk/LondonAir/Guide/home.aspx

Health matters: air pollution: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-air-pollution/health-matters-air-pollution

Reducing personal exposure: Inside the home

Keep homes ventilated - use extractor fans in bathrooms and kitchens, or open windows (if possible and safe) when:

- using cookers, especially gas cookers
- using open solid-fuel fires or freestanding gas heaters
- using candles
- using cleaning products, household sprays or aerosols and paints

The main pollutant emitted by burning solid fuels like wood is ultra-fine particulate matter, also known as $PM_{2.5}$. Studies have shown that children growing up exposed to $PM_{2.5}$ are more likely to have reduced lung function and can develop asthma. Current evidence suggests there is no safe level of $PM_{2.5}$.

Health Impacts:

The level of harm that an individual is exposed to by air pollutants will depend on many factors. This includes the dose, duration, how an individual comes into contact with the pollutant, in addition to many other factors such as age, lifestyle and current health.

Health impacts from short term exposure, can present in the form of coughing and wheezing, asthma exacerbation and, over longer years of exposure, can lead to reduced life expectancy, due to cardio-vascular/respiratory diseases, and as well as other illnesses.

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Delivering healthy air in the City of London

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FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ADVICE CONTACT US AT
Cityair@cityoflondon.gov.uk