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Air pollution news report

The term air pollution is used so often that you may not think definitions are needed. But the question is more complicated than it seems. Ask most people to define air pollution, and their first response is to describe smog, smelly things that transform brown or gray air and hover over urban centers like Los Angeles, Mexico City and Beijing. Even here, however, definitions vary. Some sources define smog as the presence of unsured levels of ground-level ozone, while other sources say things like fog mixed with smoke. A more modern and precise definition is a photochemical haze caused by the action of solar ultraviolet radiation on the atmosphere polluted by hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides especially automotive exhaust gases. Officially, air pollution can be defined as the presence of harmful substances in the air, be they microscopic particles or biological molecules, that pose health risks to living organisms, such as humans, animals or plants. Air pollution comes in many forms and can include a number of different pollutants and toxins in various combinations. Air pollution is much more than a nuisance or a disadvantage. According to the World Health Organization, air pollution kills about 4.2 million people worldwide each year. The two most common types of air pollution are ozone and particulate pollution (soot), but air pollution can also include serious pollutants such as carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxide, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and toxins such as mercury, arsenic, benzene, formaldehyde and acidic gases. Most of these pollutants are environmental, but some air pollution is due to natural causes, such as ash from volcanic eruptions. The specific composition of air pollution in a given location depends primarily on the source or sources of pollution. Car exhaust, coal-fired power plants, industrial plants and other sources of pollution all spit different types of pollutants and toxins into the air. While we consider air pollution to be a condition describing outdoor air, the quality of the air inside your home is just as important. Cooking vapours, carbon monoxide from heaters, the clean-up of formaldehyde and other chemicals from furniture and building materials, and second-hand tobacco smoke are all potential forms. indoor air pollution. Air pollution oscillates at unhealthy levels in almost every major U.S. city, interfering with people's ability to breathe, causing or aggravating many serious health problems, and putting lives at risk. Many cities around the world face the same problems, especially in so-called emerging economies such as China and India, where cleaner technologies are not yet being used in a standard way. Breathing in ozone, particulate pollution or other types of air pollution can seriously harm your health. Ozone inhalation can irritate your lungs, 'causing something like a bad sunburn in the lungs', says US Lung Respiratory (soot) pollution can increase your risk of heart attack, stroke and premature death, and may require emergency room visits for people with asthma, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Many cancers are attributed to chemical air pollutants. Air pollution is also a problem in developing countries that are not yet fully industrialized. More than half of the world's population still cooks their meals with wood, dung, coal or other solid fuels on open fires or on primitive stoves inside their homes, breathing in high levels of pollutants such as particulate pollution and carbon monoxide, resulting in 1.5 million unnecessary deaths each year. The health risks associated with air pollution are highest in infants and young children, the elderly and people with respiratory diseases such as asthma. People who work or exercise outdoors also face increased health risks due to the effects of air pollution, as do people who live or work near highways, factories or busy power plants. In addition, minorities and low-income people are often disproportionately affected by air pollution because of their place of life, placing them at higher risk of air pollution-related diseases. Low-income populations often live near industrial areas or downtown where factories, utilities and other industrial sources can create abnormally high levels of air pollution. If air pollution affects humans, it can of course also have an impact on animals and plant life. Many animal species are threatened by high levels of air pollution, and the weather conditions created by air pollution affect both animal and plant life. For example, acid rain caused by the burning of fossil fuels has radically changed the nature of forests in the northeastern United States, the Upper Midwest and the Northwest. And there is now no question that air pollution is causing changes in global weather conditions—rising global temperatures, melting polar ice caps, and the upcoming rise in ocean water levels. The evidence is clear that our personal choices and industry practices can affect air pollution levels. Cleaner industrial technologies have been shown to reduce air pollution levels, and it has been shown that as more primitive industrial practices increase, levels of hazardous air pollution also increase. Here are some of the obvious ways that humans can, and have reduced, air pollution: Reducing the burning of fossil fuels in favor of renewable energy sources. Countries that obtain their electricity from nuclear, hydroelectric, solar and wind power have lower levels of pollution than those that promote the burning of coal or natural gas. Improved fuel mileage in automobiles and introduced electric vehicles. California, for example, once plagued by dangerous smog, has significantly improved its air quality through stringent controls on auto emissions standards. Similarly, reducing the use of other internal combustion engines can reduce air pollution. The switch to or electric lawn mowers and lawn equipment, for example, have a demonstrable effect on air quality. Reducing agricultural combustion—the method of clearing forested areas for agriculture—can reduce the level of smoke and carbon dioxide in the air. This is a particular problem in developing countries. Reducing wood burning can also reduce smoke levels in the air. In some communities, wood-burning fireplaces are now banned, significantly reducing dangerous levels of smoke in the air. Gas fireplaces are better than wood burners, and even better are electric fireplaces that burn no fuel at all. Indoor air quality is improved when smoking is limited by prescription. Citizen pressure to restrict smoking in public places has a real effect on air quality. Reducing chemical compounds in paints, adhesives and solvents has improved indoor and outdoor air quality. Always look for low-VOC materials for interior improvement and, where possible, opt for water-based paints over solvent and other materials. Look for carpets, fabrics and furniture that don't gas dangerous fumes. Pollution control is possible, but it requires the individual and political will to do so, and these efforts must constantly be balanced with economic realities, as green technologies are often more expensive, especially when introduced for the first time. Such choices are in the hands of each individual: for example, do you buy a cheap but dirty car or an expensive electric car? Or are coal miners' jobs more important than clean air? These complex questions are not easy for individuals or governments to answer, but they are issues that should be addressed and debated with their eyes open to the real effects of air pollution. Smog is not only unsightly, it is deadly. In the United States, smog is widely regarded as a unique problem in Los Angeles, thanks to a high concentration of traffic and a geographic landscape that traps accumulation in picturesque peaks and valleys. (Vehicles and other fuel transportation sources are responsible for 90 percent of the risk of developing cancer in the Los Angeles area.) But ozone, the main component of smog, is likely to be a problem everywhere. Burning fossil fuels to power our vehicles emits CO2 emissions, which is the main cause of global warming. The United States is the world's largest producer of these harmful gases. The combustion of fuel also produce toxic substances such as sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide (which can be deadly). Ozone occurs when hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxide -- two common ingredients in air pollution -- come together. Sunlight causes a chemical reaction that makes the combination particularly powerful and dangerous, resulting in general respiratory problems such as wheezing and shortness of breath, as well as nausea and headaches. What is even more worrying is that repeated exposure can cause irreversible lung damage and increase the risk of lung cancer. Sitting seated traffic has a bigger impact on your health than you think. As temperatures and stress levels simmer, any pollution generated by nearby vehicles can actually seep into your car's cab, creating a concentrated solution of toxic air. As air recycles through the car, toxins can reach levels up to 10 times those found in the normal city air. These pollutants, sometimes called particles, are absorbed by the lungs and can cause problems with the respiratory system, heart, asthma, lung cancer and various other infections. Exposure to particulate pollution can also lead to a decrease in life expectancy. Diesel vehicles are the worst offenders, responsible for 79 per cent of vehicle-based particulate pollution. But while we tend to think that cars are the worst culprits, seaports are another huge source of air pollution. People who live and work near Los Angeles seaports and long beach, for example, are among the populations most at risk of cancer in Southern California - ships burn huge amounts of fuel, even when they're not moving. Airports are also outstanding in this regard. Both industries have methods of reducing pollution - ships can save fuel by using coastal energy instead of idling at the dock, and planes can reduce fuel consumption if they move more efficiently around airport grounds when they are not in the air. But such practices are relatively rare. The facts are frightening, but we have already made progress and there are other steps we can take. So what can be done? The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which develops regulations and programs to reduce atmospheric toxins from transportation, says the key to reducing harmful emissions is a three-way approach: using low-carbon fuels, improving vehicle technology and simply travel fewer kilometres. Other simple changes, such as driving carefully and keeping your car in good condition, also help save fuel. To reduce fossil fuel emissions and reduce dependence on imported crude oil, the EPA strongly supports the use of renewable fuels (such as electricity) and alternative fuels (such as natural gas). Some types of fuel are even considered both alternative and renewable. Automakers are developing, producing and selling many new alternative fuel vehicles, but some older gasoline and diesel vehicles may converted to work with clean alternative fuels. Too much. Too much.

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