

AIR POLLUTION

Could the air you inhale be harming your health?

Breathing in toxic air is bad for everyone. According to the European Environment Agency, pollution is responsible for around 5,300 deaths a year in Austria. The Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) und Greenpeace found out that 4.5 million deaths worldwide are caused by people inhaling polluted air every year.

harm – schädigen
toxic – giftig
caused – verursacht
inhale – einatmen

Air pollution is a known cause of lung cancer and is connected to heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and changes in the brain linked to dementia. Other chronic health conditions, such as asthma, bronchial diseases and skin problems, are also triggered by exposure to pollutants. And for children, the elderly and those with existing respiratory conditions, pollution is a major concern.

cause – Ursache
cancer – Krebs
stroke – Schlaganfall
dementia – Demenz
triggered – ausgelöst
exposure – Ausgesetztsein
respiratory – Atem-
major – bedeutend
concern – Sorge

The particle problem

So, what is it about the pollution that is so toxic? Gases and particle pollution is the issue. This airborne material is a mix of carbon emissions from vehicles and the burning of fossil fuels, soot, windblown dust, sand and sea salt, and tiny specks of rubber and metals. These particles can get deep into the lungs and potentially into the bloodstream.

issue – Thema
airborne – luftgetragen
emission – Ausstoß
vehicle – Fahrzeug
fossil – fossil
fuels – Brennstoffe
soot – Ruß
specks – Fleckchen
rubber – Gummi

Once released into the atmosphere, pollutants have the potential to affect people who are hundreds or even thousands of kilometres from the source.

Minimise exposure / Keep dirty air out

While it might sound obvious, avoiding busy roads when walking will help. "Take the backstreets instead," advises Professor Martin Williams, a quality scientist and clean air champion for UK Research and Innovation. You can cut exposure to harmful particles when using side roads or parks by 50%.

In pollution hotspots, shut the windows when indoors – or driving.

3 Ways to cut your contribution

Let's make small changes!

- 1 Tweak your travel habits: Walk, cycle or use public transport instead of using a car. If you do drive, choose a clean model and drive mindfully.
- 2 Watch your waste: Recycling and composting food minimises emissions.
- 3 Be energy-efficient: Make sure your house is insulated and wear a sweater rather than turn up the heating.

obvious – offensichtlich
avoid – vermeiden

contribution – Beitrag
tweak – optimieren
insulated – isoliert



Smog in Shanghai



Choose a clean model!