

Air Pollution & Exercise



As temperatures heat up, the Metro East can experience poorer air quality conditions. While exercise is an important component of a healthy lifestyle, air pollution and exercise can harm health. This is especially true if you have asthma, heart or lung conditions and diabetes.

Even if you are in great shape, air pollution still puts your health at risk. Due to the increased amount of air taken into the body during exercise, athletes are vulnerable too. According to the American Lung Association, athletes take in up to 20 times more air per minute while exercising. If air is polluted, 20 times more pollutants come in contact with an athlete's respiratory tract, reducing lung function and interfering with his or her performance.

Steps you can take to limit your exposure to air pollution without sacrificing your exercise plan:

- Sign-up to receive the daily air quality forecast through email or on your Smartphone at EnviroFlash-www.enviroflash.info. This will alert you when unhealthy air quality is predicted.
- During ozone season, limit outdoor exercise to early morning or late evening when ozone levels are lower.
- Avoid exercising outdoors when the air is thick and stagnant. Frequently athletes relate shortness of breath and poor performance on the heat, but often they are feeling the effects of air pollution.
- Avoid congested streets when exercising outdoors. Pollution levels tend to be higher within 50 feet from roadways.
- Breathe through your nose as it is the body's first line of defense against allergens and pollutants.