How to fight back against air pollution

Air Quality News from IQAir

Air pollution causes 200,000 premature deaths in America every year. On average, the lives of those who die from air-pollution-related causes are shortened 10 years. While air pollution has improved in recent years in some cities, more than 40% of all Americans are still exposed to ozone or particle pollution levels that put their health at risk, according to the American Lung Association.

As summer approaches, and air pollution levels climb in many regions, it's a good time to take stock of what you can do to help reduce pollution where you live. Here are five steps you can take starting today that will help improve the air you breathe, and help create a healthier environment for everyone.

1. **Monitor the air quality where you live.** Learn more about pollution levels and the air quality where you live by checking your State of the Air. Then, regularly check forecasts from local air-quality monitoring agencies to be prepared when the air is unhealthy.

2. **Increase the energy efficiency of your home.** Every year in the U.S., electricity-generating plants spew more than 2.2 billion tons of carbon dioxide into the air (40% of the U.S. total). Making your home more energy efficient will help reduce pollution associated with power generation. As a bonus, you will also save money by cutting your energy consumption. From large projects, such as installing solar panels, to small changes, such as turning off lights and appliances whenever you leave a room, you can help cut air pollution at home.

3. **Reduce, reuse and recycle.** Unnecessary purchases and product packaging pollute the air as a result of manufacturing and disposal. The three primary ways to reduce the pollution caused by excess consumption and excess packaging are to reduce, reuse and recycle.

   **Reduce:** The best way to reduce waste is to never produce it in the first place. Consume less. One way to do this is to eliminate optional purchases and unnecessary packaging in the products you purchase. Buy products with less packaging or consider buying products in larger quantities/sizes that reduce packaging.
Reuse: Reusing products helps eliminate the pollution generated by manufacturing new products. There are many ways to do this, such as: Save paper and plastic bags, repair broken furniture instead of buying new, sell or donate old household items instead of putting them in the trash.

Recycle: Buy products made from recycled materials whenever possible. Check with your curbside pickup service to see what they accept for recycling. Recyclable materials include plastics, metal, newspapers, glass and more.

4. Re-examine your personal transportation. The average passenger vehicle emits about 4.7 metric tons of carbon dioxide into the air every year. One important step you can take is to drive less. Consider using public transportation or a bicycle. Also, when shopping for a new car, choose the most fuel-efficient model that meets your needs. You can also improve fuel economy by going easy on the brake and gas pedals, avoiding hard accelerations, and unloading unnecessary items from your car that add to the vehicle’s weight and waste fuel. It’s also important to check tires regularly for proper inflation as underinflated tires reduce fuel economy.

5. Improve your Indoor Air Quality. When considering the impact of air pollution, it’s important to take steps to ensure the air you breathe at home is clean and healthy. Remove airborne pollutants from the air inside your home by using a high-performance air purifier such as the IQAir HealthPro® Plus or the Perfect 16 whole-house system. These IQAir systems also help protect against radon and other indoor air pollutants, and the HealthPro Plus offers additional protections against volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Also, never allow smoking indoors, especially if you have children.

By taking action such as the steps above to fight air pollution, you will become part of the solution to a major global health problem. You will also save money and enjoy the many other benefits of a living a cleaner, healthier lifestyle. For more information on how to help reduce air pollution, visit www.epa.gov.

This online publication is brought to you by The IQAir Group, which develops innovative air quality solutions for indoor environments around the globe. IQAir is the exclusive educational partner of the American Lung Association for the air purifier industry.