

Air Quality Alert Guidance for Health Care Providers: Ozone

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) reminds health care providers attending to patients affected by poor air quality to be alert to possible adverse effects of ozone, particularly among individuals at higher risk of severe outcomes.

- Increased emergency department visits for respiratory and cardiovascular conditions can occur during days with poor air quality. Monitor health care capacity closely and plan for a possible increase in patient visits due to asthma, COPD, and metabolic and cardiovascular disease exacerbations.
- Medical management consists of carefully assessing signs and symptoms, providing supportive and symptomatic care for poor air quality exposure, and treating possible existing respiratory and cardiovascular illness.
- Advise patients that staying informed about air quality alerts and having a plan to minimize exposure can reduce health impacts. Follow [Maine DEP's Air Quality Forecast](#) or call Maine DEP's Air Quality Hotline at 1-800-223-1196 for current information.
- Proactively counsel patients on strategies to avoid or reduce smoke exposure, especially among individuals with asthma, COPD, or cardiovascular disease, children, older adults, and pregnant people. These strategies are categorized below based on Air Quality Index alert levels:

Alert Level		Guidance
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups		• Sensitive groups should make outdoor activities shorter and less intense. It is okay to be active outside, but take more breaks, and plan outdoor activities for times when air quality is better. Watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath. • Those with asthma should follow their action plans and keep quick-relief medications nearby. • Everyone else should consider making outdoor activities shorter and less intense.
Unhealthy		• Sensitive groups should avoid long or intense outdoor activities. Plan outdoor activities for times when air quality is better or consider moving activities indoors. • Those with asthma should follow their action plans and keep quick-relief medications nearby. • Everyone else should reduce long or intense outdoor activities, take more breaks, and plan outdoor activities for times when air quality is better.
Very Unhealthy		• Sensitive groups should avoid all outdoor activity. Move activities indoors or reschedule to a time when air quality is better. • Those with asthma should follow their action plans and keep quick-relief medications nearby. • Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion. Consider moving activities indoors or rescheduling them to a time when air quality is better.
Hazardous		• Everyone should avoid all physical activity outdoors. • Those with asthma should follow their action plans and keep quick-relief medications nearby.

Current information on air quality forecasts can be found here:

- [Maine DEP Air Quality Forecast](#)
- Maine DEP Air Quality Hotline: 1-800-223-1196
- [MaineTracking Network](#): Current and Future Air Quality Index and Ground Level Smoke Forecasts

Additional health information may be found on the following websites:

- [Effects of Common Air Pollutants \(EPA\)](#)
- [Particle Pollution and Your Patients' Health](#)
- [Patient Education Tools for Particulate Matter \(EPA\)](#)
- [Maine CDC asthma prevention and control](#)
- [U.S. EPA's asthma control and management](#)
- [AIRNOW for smoke impacted areas](#)
- [Air Quality guide for Particle Pollution](#)
- [Air Quality guide for Ozone](#)