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Living Through High AQI: How Air Pollution Impacts Your Everyday Health



With AQI levels becoming a growing concern across Indian cities, air pollution is no longer just an environmental issue. It is a daily health concern, with effects that can reach far beyond our lungs.

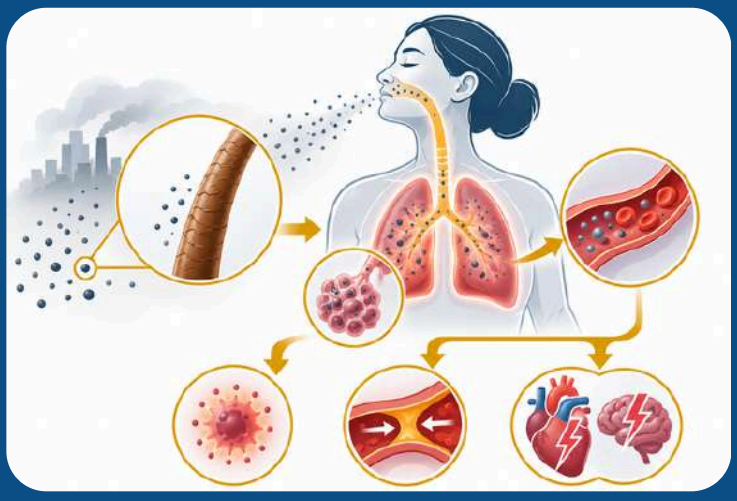
DID YOU KNOW?

The World Health Organization estimates that outdoor and household air pollution together are associated with around **6.7 million premature deaths every year worldwide.**

THE HIDDEN HEALTH EFFECTS

When Your Heart Breathes It In

Fine particles called PM2.5, measuring 2.5 micrometres or less, are so tiny that they are much thinner than a strand of human hair. They can travel deep into the lungs, with some entering the bloodstream, triggering inflammation, affect blood vessels and increase the risk of heart attacks and strokes.



Daily check: Avoid strenuous outdoor exercise when AQI levels are high.

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THE HIDDEN HEALTH EFFECTS

The Mind in Polluted Air

Prolonged exposure to air pollution has been linked to poorer cognitive health. Research is exploring its possible effects on memory, attention and brain function.



Daily Check: : Limit prolonged exposure to traffic fumes and heavily polluted areas.

Your Skin's Pollution Problem

Pollution can irritate the skin, damage its natural protective layer and make it more sensitive, dry and prone to inflammation and acne breakouts.



Daily Check: Use broad-spectrum sunscreen and gently cleanse and moisturise to protect your skin barrier.

The Air Quality Behind a Restless Night

Pollution can irritate the airways, worsen asthma and disrupt sleep. Studies also link poor air quality with lower sleep quality.



Daily Check: Keep your bedroom smoke-free and consider a suitable HEPA air purifier if outdoor pollution is high.

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AQI : KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

AQI (India)	Category	What to do
0–50	🟢 Good	Enjoy normal activities.
51–100	🟡 Satisfactory	Sensitive individuals should remain aware of symptoms.
101–200	🟠 Moderate	People with asthma or heart and lung conditions should reduce prolonged or strenuous outdoor activity.
201–300	🔴 Poor	Avoid strenuous outdoor exercise; reduce exposure.
301–400	🟣 Very Poor	Avoid outdoor physical activity and follow local advisories.
401–500	⚫ Severe	Avoid unnecessary outdoor exposure and follow official health guidance.

Note: AQI is a guide to outdoor air quality, not a guarantee of personal safety. Check your local readings and health advisories daily.

MYTH VS. FACT



MYTH:
A scarf or regular cloth mask is enough to protect you from air pollution.



FACT:
Regular cloth masks cannot reliably filter fine particles like PM2.5. A well-fitted N95 or N99 respirator offers better protection when outdoor exposure cannot be avoided.

CAN AN AIR PURIFIER HELP?

Yes. An air purifier with a HEPA (High-Efficiency Particulate Air) filter can trap tiny airborne particles, including PM2.5, helping improve indoor air quality

When choosing one: Check that it suits your room size and replace its filters as recommended. An activated carbon filter can also help reduce certain gases and odours.



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WHEN SHOULD YOU SEEK MEDICAL HELP?

Persistent coughing, wheezing, unusual breathlessness or chest discomfort should not be ignored, particularly when air quality gets poor.

Reminder: If you have an existing heart or lung condition, keep your prescribed medication handy and follow your doctor's advice. Seek urgent medical attention for severe breathing difficulty, significant chest pain or sudden symptoms such as facial drooping or difficulty speaking.



NAVIGATING INDIA'S HIGH AQI SEASON

Air quality in many Indian cities tends to worsen after the monsoon, particularly during winter. Cooler temperatures, slower winds, vehicle emissions, construction dust and crop residue burning can cause pollutants to linger closer to the ground.



While we take steps to protect ourselves from pollution, we must also be mindful of the pollution we create. Every choice to reduce emissions, avoid waste burning and travel cleaner brings us one step closer to healthier air.

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