

How Do You Deal with “Bad Air” Days?

Let’s face it – some days the air quality is very poor. If you suffer from respiratory issues, the effect of “bad air” days is stronger for you than for most other people. But as a person sensitive to changes in air quality, here are some things you can do to manage those days more effectively.

1. Stay alert to the current **Air Quality Index (AQI)** in your community. Levels are broadcast every day on radio and television weather news and can also be found on many websites. Here are the AQI categories:

Air Quality Index	Color/ Number	What it means
Good	GREEN 0-50	Air quality is satisfactory. Little or no risk.
Moderate	YELLOW 51-100	Air quality is acceptable, but may cause a moderate concern for people extremely sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	ORANGE 101-150	General public should not experience problems, but sensitive groups may experience effects.
Unhealthy	RED 151-200	Everyone may experience health effects and it can be more serious for sensitive groups.
Very Unhealthy	PURPLE 201-300	Health Alert – anyone may experience serious health effects.
Hazardous	MAROON 301-500	Health Warning – emergency situation for everyone.

2. When levels are high, try to stay inside as much as possible.
3. Try to do your outdoor activities in the early morning or after sunset. Do not exercise or exert yourself outdoors when levels are high.
4. Stay away from areas where there is heavy traffic.
5. Avoid exposure to all noxious fumes as much as possible.
6. When traveling away from home, check ahead for levels in those areas.

If you already have a respiratory care plan for dealing with outdoor air issues, follow the plan carefully. If you don’t have a plan or if problems still occur, contact your doctor or respiratory therapist for guidance.

More information on the effects of outdoor air pollution can be found online at www.YourLungHealth.org