

### Advisory for Air Pollution

Different areas of National Capital Region (NCR) are recording ambient levels of air pollution that are rated as severe, exceeding the safety limits for key air pollutants that pose health risks to people. Here is an advisory to reduce personal exposure to high levels of air pollution.

The WHO air quality guidelines<sup>i</sup> offer global guidance on thresholds and limits for key air pollutants that pose health risks. The guidelines indicate that reducing air pollution (particularly that of fine particulate matter - PM 2.5), can achieve significant health benefits.

In the prevailing conditions of severe levels, the following measures are encouraged:

- Avoid prolonged or heavy outdoor activities.
- Face masks are generally not regarded as a suitable measure for protection of health but may be indicated in certain special circumstances. For example, during prolonged commuting and outdoor activities in situations of hazardous air quality. Disposable masks known as N95 may help. N95 masks can filter most of the PM2.5 particles. If masks are used, they must be fitted properly with a tight seal around the users' mouth and nose. Paper "comfort" or "dust" masks are designed to trap large particles only, such as sawdust. These masks will not protect the lungs from small particles such as PM2.5. Scarves or bandanas are not helpful.
- Use of air purifiers at the office and at home. Use of air conditioners may also help to reduce the concentration of particulate in the indoor environment.
- Ensure gaps in windows and doors are all sealed.
- Remain indoors as much as possible particularly those more vulnerable, such as children, pregnant women and older people, or those with pre-existing illness, should stay indoors as much as possible and avoid roads with heavy traffic. External doors and windows should remain closed to reduce the penetration of pollution from outside. Keep washing your eyes with running water regularly and do regular gargles with warm water.
- Keep rooms inside homes clean:
  - ◆ Wet mopping and dusting is preferable to sweeping or vacuuming, as sweeping and vacuuming can stir up additional dusts and particles. However, vacuums with a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter can be used.
  - ◆ Various types of air purifiers exist, including HEPA filters, and electronic air cleaners, such as electrostatic precipitators. All air purifiers need to be used according to manufacturers' guidelines. Avoid using an air purifier that works by generating ozone, as this will increase the pollution levels.
  - ◆ Keep windows closed.
  - ◆ Prioritize the cleaning of rooms used for sleeping, particularly for vulnerable groups. This could mean more regular cleaning, assigning an air purifier to these rooms, sealing windows to prevent outdoor air coming inside.
- Please visit the nearest hospital/dispensary in case of any breathlessness, giddiness, chest pain, chest constriction, and irritation in eyes. Persons who are taking medications to help manage existing illness should ensure that do not miss their medication.
- Check the advice from Central and Delhi Government to guide your planned activities.

- A fact sheet on air pollution and measures that can be taken by individuals to mitigate against the risk of health impacts can be found on the [SEAR website](#)
- Please also refer to the advisories from National Centre for Disease Control, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India
  - <https://ncdc.gov.in/WriteReadData/p92g8/10611197501542002192.gif>
  - <https://ncdc.gov.in/WriteReadData/p92g8/78346924851542002344.gif>
  - <https://ncdc.gov.in/WriteReadData/p92g8/64781509811542002413.gif>
  - <https://ncdc.gov.in/WriteReadData/p92g8/2854177061542002460.gif>

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[https://www.who.int/phe/health\\_topics/outdoorair/outdoorair\\_aqg/en/](https://www.who.int/phe/health_topics/outdoorair/outdoorair_aqg/en/)