

## **Air Pollution and Heart Disease**

A prescription for a healthy heart is to eat a healthy diet, quit smoking, get more active and control blood pressure and cholesterol. Another way to protect your heart is to check your daily air quality forecast.

February is American Heart Month, a good time to remind people with heart disease that air pollution can trigger heart attacks, strokes and worsen heart conditions. One in three Americans has heart disease and could benefit from this knowledge.

Research has shown that air pollution, especially particle pollution, can harm the heart. The very small particles are released or created in the atmosphere as a result of emissions by cars, trucks, industry, forest fires and other sources. Research by scientists at EPA and partners is helping to understand how particle pollution affects the cardiovascular system and who may be at greater risk.

You can take steps to reduce your exposure to air pollution by checking your daily Air Quality Index (AQI) forecast. The AQI tells you how clean or polluted your air is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for you.

- Learn more about protecting your heart from air pollution at: [www.epa.gov/healthyheart](http://www.epa.gov/healthyheart).
- Check the Air Quality Index at: [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov)
- Learn more about the Million Hearts Initiative launched by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at: [http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/about\\_mh.html](http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/about_mh.html).