

Email text to be sent to healthcare professionals in GP practices and emergency departments in London the day before episode of high air pollution

EMAIL SUBJECT: Probable High Air Pollution Alert for Healthcare Professionals

This email is for information

Probable High pollution has been forecast for London for [day & date here]

Exposure to high air pollution may induce symptoms such as wheezing, shortness of breath, exacerbations of asthma and COPD, and other symptoms. These symptoms could appear within hours of exposure or several days later.

Key clinical messages

In future, consider having conversations with your patients about how air pollution could impact them, and any steps they can take to reduce their risk of harm. This can be done routinely as part of long-term condition management, so patients learn how to self-manage:

- Remind patients to continue to follow their asthma/COPD plans, take their preventer inhaler or controller medications as prescribed, carry their reliever inhaler and to arrange a review after every exacerbation.
- People can continue physical activity during air pollution episodes. [Children do not need to be kept from school or prevented from taking part in games.](#)
- However, during high air pollution episodes, older people, and those with cardiac or respiratory conditions **may** need to reduce vigorous physical activity, particularly if they experience symptoms.

Additional steps patients can take to reduce their exposure and contribution to air pollution

- Walk, cycle and scoot more, and avoid the busiest roads and times when you can.
- Use public transport where you can, but if you do have to drive, switch your engine off when you're stationary.
- Avoid unnecessary burning at home (e.g. in a wood burning stove or open fire) unless it is your only source of heat.

Background information

- Air pollution can affect everyone, but people with cardiac or respiratory disease, older people, children and pregnant people are at greater risk of health impacts.
- There is no safe level of air pollution. The [Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2022](#) highlights that long-term exposure to low levels of pollution are harmful to health.

Visit [Global Action Plan's Clean Air Hub](#) for information & leaflets to share with patients throughout the year.

If you have questions or feedback about this alert, please contact:

AQ.programmeoffice@ukhsa.gov.uk

Issued by: NHS England-London and the Mayor of London

The Mayor of London's air pollution alerts are based on data from Imperial College London Air Quality Forecast Service.