

# Follow These Steps To Use The Air Quality Health Index

## Check your local AQHI forecast

Find the location nearest you on the AQHI website, then use the “forecast maximums” and their health messages as a guide for your outdoor activities. This is the estimated maximum the AQHI will reach that day; You can also check hourly AQHI updates and find more information at: [airhealth.ca](http://airhealth.ca)

## Determine if you're at risk

Air pollution affects us differently, depending on exposure time, pre-existing health status, and the concentration of pollutants. Children, the elderly, pregnant people, and those with diabetes or heart and lung disease are most sensitive. Performing strenuous outdoor activity also increases risk. Your healthcare professional can help to confirm your risk level if you're unsure.

## Review the health messaging

The AQHI provides advice as to the effects of air pollution for people in vulnerable demographics as well as for the general public. Remember: During heavy smoke events, all people are at risk, regardless of their age or health.

## Make a plan

Listen to your body: How do you feel with the current index value? Consider the type of activity you'll be doing, your level of exertion, as well as the age and relative health of the participants. This will help you decide whether to continue with, modify, or cancel an activity.

## Take action!

Follow your plan to limit short-term exposure to poor air quality: reduce or reschedule outdoor activity, pay attention to physical symptoms such as coughing, irritated eyes, and difficulty breathing. Use an elevated AQHI as a guide to modify your behaviour, and always follow your doctor's advice for managing chronic conditions.

## Stay up to date

Download the WeatherCAN app to monitor current AQHI conditions and hourly updated forecasts during your outdoor activities. You can customise the push notifications to alert you when the index is predicted to reach YOUR risk number so you always stay prepared!

## Reduce your footprint

Use elevated AQHI readings as a reminder that you can help reduce air pollution from your own home. For example, you might walk or cycle to errands when possible, mulch or compost leaves and yard waste instead of burning, and even plant and care for native trees.

## Energy efficient retrofits

The Canada Greener Homes Grant Initiative can help you make your house more energy efficient and resistant to climate change. As well as reducing your energy consumption, you can prevent the infiltration of outdoor pollutants, making your home healthier!

## Make some noise!

Become a champion for clean air! Teach your children, friends, and family about the AQHI and how to use it, and if something is affecting YOUR neighbourhood, tell everyone about it by using the hashtags #AQWatcher and #NBAQ on social media. If your local go-to media for weather reports isn't using AQHI yet, ask them!

## Start a new habit

With technology like smartphones and tools like the WeatherCAN app, making the AQHI part of your day has never been more accessible. Like two sides of a coin, following the weather forecast helps you protect the outside of your body from extremes, while receiving AQHI updates helps you protect your body's insides. Make it a point to check your AQHI today, and every day!



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