



State of Utah

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Environmental Quality

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NEWS RELEASE

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Exercise Outdoors, Stay Safe with Tips from Doctors and Air Quality Experts

Salt Lake City, Utah – Much of Utahns' physical activity happens outside. Tips and tools available from the Division of Air Quality (DAQ), Department of Health (DOH), and Intermountain Healthcare ensure all Utahns can exercise outside and minimize impacts to health.

Ozone pollution – formed during the hot, sunny days of summer – can irritate the respiratory system, causing coughing and throat irritation. It is a particular concern for children, the elderly and those with respiratory disorders. During outdoor physical activity even healthy adults may experience health effects during high ozone periods. Impacts occur during physical activity as ozone penetrates deeper into the parts of the lungs that are more vulnerable to injury.

Local research done by cardiologists at Intermountain Medical Center shows that even short-term exposure to bad air can impact heart and lung health. "For Utahns with coronary heart disease the risk of heart attack doubles on days with high pollution episodes," said Dr. Muhlestein, a cardiologist with Intermountain Heart Institute.

The keys to staying safe while exercising outside are knowing where to find information about pollution levels and avoiding outdoor activity when ozone is highest.

"Ozone is harmful, but predictable. We know it's highest between noon and 6PM and encourage Utahns to exercise outdoors earlier in the morning or in the evening to avoid peak pollution hours," said Dr. Robert Rolfs, deputy director of the Utah Department of Health.

The Utah Asthma Program publishes physical activity guidelines for Utahns to use in planning outdoor exercise time during pollution episodes.

The Division of Air Quality's website has both real time pollution readings and forecast information available to inform Utahns of high pollution events taking place or about to happen.

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"We want Utahns to use this data and understand their air quality," said Bryce Bird, director of

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Utah's Division of Air Quality. In addition to the air quality website, the division sends email alerts when pollution builds.

Intermountain Healthcare's Dr. Terri Flint is familiar with promoting healthy lifestyles for Utah's communities. "We want people to do the simple things like parking a little farther away at the grocery store, playing Frisbee with their kids, or even adding more steps to their daily routine," Flint said, adding, "but we want them to do this safely and clean air is critical to the goal of increasing activity and community health."

DAQ, DOH and Intermountain Healthcare will continue to coordinate on air quality and health issues and partner together to get the word out. "We came together today to talk about the work being done to help improve air quality, study impacts to health, and also to encourage Utahns to learn about how they can stay safe and stay healthy by exercising outdoors," Bird added.

More information is available at:

<http://Airquality.utah.gov>

<http://health.utah.gov/asthma/>

<http://intermountainhealthcare.org/live-well>

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