

## How Can You Protect Yourself?

People with asthma should be aware that on high ozone days they may be more susceptible to asthma attacks.

### **WATCH FOR OZONE ACTION DAYS**

Ozone Action Days are called when weather forecasters predict weather conditions that are likely to cause high ozone.

### **LIMIT TIME OUTDOORS**

People at risk should try to limit their time outdoors on high ozone days in order to reduce the risk of exposure to ozone. When indoors it is recommended to stay in a well ventilated or air-conditioned environment.

### **CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR**

If, at any time, you experience symptoms such as tightness in the chest, coughing and wheezing, contact your doctor or local clinic.

## What Else Can You Do?

In addition to the precautions you can take to reduce your exposure to ozone, you can also do your part to reduce the ozone problem. As part of the Ozone Action Day Program, the area's industries, small businesses, and local residents are asked to voluntarily reduce emissions that can cause ozone pollution.

### **ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO REDUCE OZONE POLLUTION INCLUDE:**

- Postpone mowing your lawn.
- Fill your car's gas tank in the evening.
- Carpool, bus, walk, or bike to work.

## For More Information

**Contact your State air pollution control agency or U.S. EPA:**

**Illinois Environmental Protection Agency**  
(217) 782-5562

**Indiana Department of Environmental Management**  
(800) 451-6027

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**  
(800) 621-8431

**Chicago Area Daily Air Quality Report**  
(708) 865-6880  
**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**  
Region 5 Library  
77 W. Jackson Blvd. (PL-16J)  
Chicago, IL 60604-3507

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77 West Jackson Blvd  
Chicago, IL 60604  
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## **A Special Alert**

For

# **PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA**

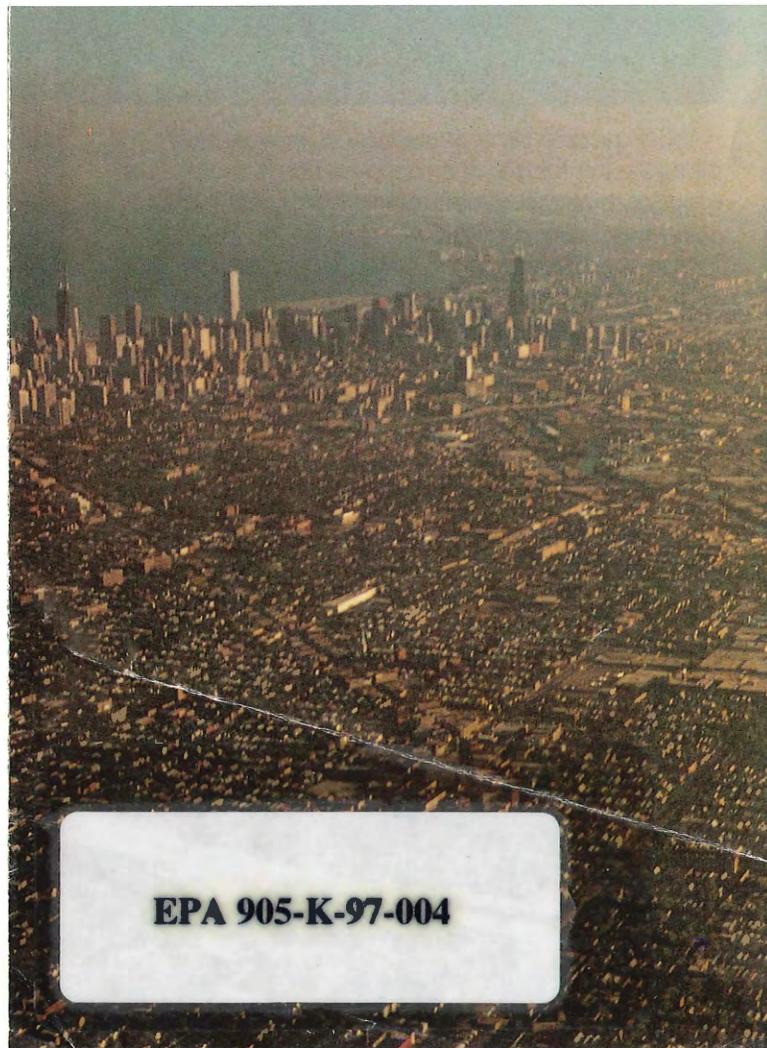
And Other

**Respiratory Problems**

**IN THE CHICAGO**

**METROPOLITAN AREA AND  
NORTHWEST INDIANA**

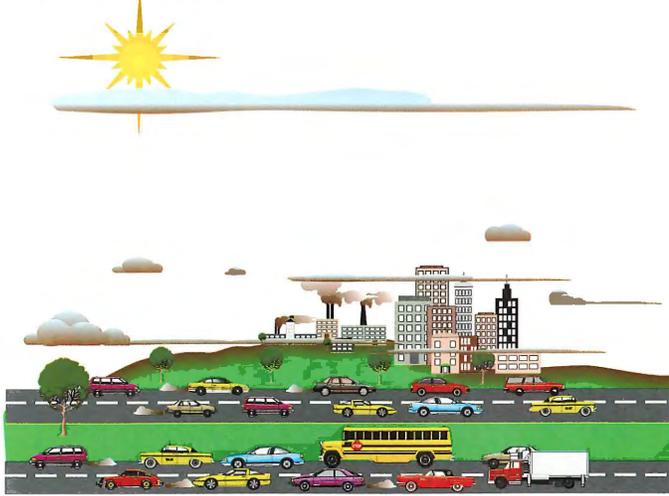
**OZONE ACTION DAYS**



# WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE AIR?

## What is Ozone?

Ground-level ozone is commonly referred to as smog. Smog is formed when a mixture of air pollutants are "baked" in the hot, summer sun. These pollutants are released from cars and factories.



When people think about ozone, they usually picture a thick layer of smog over Los Angeles. They may not think that Chicago and Northwest Indiana also have a smog problem.

However, people in the Chicago and Northwest Indiana metropolitan area face a challenging ozone problem that poses a significant health risk. The ozone problem affects the outlying suburban and rural areas as well as Chicago, Aurora, Waukegan, and Gary.

## What are the Health Effects of Ozone?

Although it cannot be seen or tasted, ozone can cause a variety of effects on your respiratory system.

### COUGHING AND WHEEZING

Ozone can irritate your lungs and throat, causing symptoms such as coughing and wheezing.

### SHORTNESS OF BREATH

Ozone can constrict your breathing passages, making it harder to breathe.

### CHEST PAIN

Ozone reacts with lung tissue, causing swelling and chest pain.



## Who is at Risk?

These health effects are of concern to everyone who works, plays or spends time outdoors, even the healthiest people. However, the effects are most dangerous for people with asthma, children, and the elderly.

### ASTHMATICS

Ozone can aggravate asthma, causing more asthma attacks, increased use of medication, more medical treatment, and more visits to hospital emergency clinics.

### CHILDREN

Asthma is one of the leading causes of childhood hospital admissions. In addition, children are more susceptible to the effects of ozone because:

- Pound for pound, children breathe more air (and ozone) than adults.
- Children spend more time outdoors than adults.
- Children's respiratory systems are still developing.

### ELDERLY

Ozone presents an increased risk to the elderly because it can aggravate pre-existing respiratory diseases and is associated with increased hospital admissions.

The elderly experience reduced sensitivity to the symptoms of ozone; therefore, early warning signs of the harmful effects of ozone may not be present.