

## July 2018 – Million Hearts® Messaging: Air Quality

Summertime is here, making it the perfect time to get outside and exercise! But before you go, anyone with a history of heart disease should make sure to check the air quality in their area before heading outside. Studies show that air pollution is especially dangerous for those who have already had a heart attack or stroke.



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### July's Focus

Sunshine and blue skies make the month of July the perfect time to get outside and exercise! Check out new walking trails or biking paths. But before you go, anyone with a history of heart disease should first check the air quality in their area. Studies show that air pollution is especially dangerous for those who have already had a heart attack or stroke.

### Did you know?

- Particle pollution can trigger heart attacks, stroke, irregular heart rhythms and cause other serious heart problems at any time of year, but it's especially dangerous for those who have already suffered a cardiovascular event.
- An estimated 130,000 premature deaths and 180,000 non-fatal heart attacks occur in the U.S. each year due to particle pollution, many of them repeat events.
- Some 92% of cardiac patients are not informed of health risks related to air pollution.
- Doctors and other health care providers can help their patients who have already suffered a heart attack or stroke understand the risks of air pollution and how to reduce them.
- People who are at risk for cardiovascular disease can use the daily air quality forecast on AirNow.gov and on weather reports to check the air quality in their area.

Exercising regularly is important for staying healthy, especially if you have heart disease. But the air we breathe can also have a big effect on heart and brain health. Medical studies show that polluted air, such as smog or wildfire smoke, can trigger heart attacks, stroke or irregular heart rhythms, especially in people who have already suffered a heart attack or stroke. By adjusting when and where you exercise, those who have had a cardiovascular event in the past can lead a healthier lifestyle and also help reduce their risk of additional heart problems or stroke triggered by air pollution.

### Million Hearts® Member Spotlight

The American Heart Association, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, which includes the city of San Francisco, are just a few entities who have been working to address the harmful health effects of air pollution. Here's how:

- AHA has published a [first-of-its-kind study](#) on how air pollution increases stress hormone levels and induces negative metabolic changes, issued [scientific statements](#) on the matter and offered [fact sheets](#) on how to best address the problem.
- The EPA has publicized its site [AirNow.gov](#) as a one-stop place for people to find out what the air quality is like in their area. Key in your zip code to find out if the air is in the red zone ("unhealthy," "very unhealthy" or "hazardous") or green zone ("good").
- The [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#), a regional air pollution control agency, started a program called [Spare the Air](#) in 1991 to reduce air pollution and notify residents when an air quality alert is in effect. The program educates residents about the effects of air pollution and encourages them to take action to prohibit smog or soot by driving less during the summer and avoiding fires in the winter, which contributes to [particulate matter](#) in the air.

## Introducing the Community-Clinical Linkages Toolkit

The Million Hearts® Collaboration, American Heart Association and other stakeholders have unveiled a new tool to promote community-clinical linkages: The [Community Clinical-Linkages Toolkit](#)! The Toolkit organizes an array of resources to help public health practitioners develop and strengthen effective community-clinical linkages. **Join the Million Hearts® partner call at 1:00pm EDT on Tuesday, July 31, to learn more. Use this [link](#) to register.**

### Social Media Messages

#### Channels to follow and re-tweet or share

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/millionheartsus> (@MillionHeartsUS)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/millionhearts>

#### Twitter

Summertime is the perfect time to get outside and exercise! But before you go, those with a history of heart disease should check the #AirQuality first. <http://bit.do/en7Hn>

Some particle #pollution are too small to be seen with the naked eye but can trigger a repeat #heartattack or #stroke. Learn more: <http://bit.do/en7Ht> [Image #1]

Unhealthy air can harm #heart and #brain health. Find out how it harms patients' health, who's at risk and what to do about it: <http://bit.do/en7G6> [Image #2]

Did you know? Poor #AirQuality can trigger a repeat #heartattack or #stroke. Before you go outside this summer, make sure you know 6 ways to protect your health: <http://bit.do/en7HE>

92 percent of cardiac patients are not told of health risks related to air pollution. Doctors and other health care providers can help spread the word about its danger! <http://bit.do/en7Ht>

#### Facebook

Summertime is here, making it the perfect time to get outside and exercise! But before you go, those who have had a heart attack or stroke should check the air quality in their area. Studies show that air pollution can trigger heart attacks, stroke or irregular heart rhythms. <http://bit.do/en7Hn>

Sometimes air pollution is obvious, but often the air is full of tiny particles that we can't see. Particles can be solid or liquid and can form naturally or come from car exhaust, industry, or wildfires. Some particles are so small (thinner than a human hair!) that they can get into your lungs and bloodstream, which could trigger a repeat heart attack and stroke. <http://bit.do/en7Ht> [Image #1]

Polluted air can cause a heart attack, stroke or irregular heart rhythms in people who have already had a cardiovascular event. Find out who is at risk and what you can do to protect yourself and your family. <http://bit.do/en7G6> [Image #2]

Many Americans are aware of the ways that they can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease: control their blood pressure, quit smoking, exercise and eat a healthy diet. What is not well known is that air pollution is also a risk factor, especially for people who have already had a heart attack or stroke. In fact, 92% of cardiac patients are not informed of health risks related to air pollution. Doctors can help. Find out how. <http://bit.do/en7HE>

Some 92% of cardiac patients are not informed of health risks related to air pollution. Doctors and other health care providers can help their patients who have already suffered a heart attack or stroke understand the risks of air pollution and how to reduce them. <http://bit.do/en7Ht>

### Social Media Images

Image #1

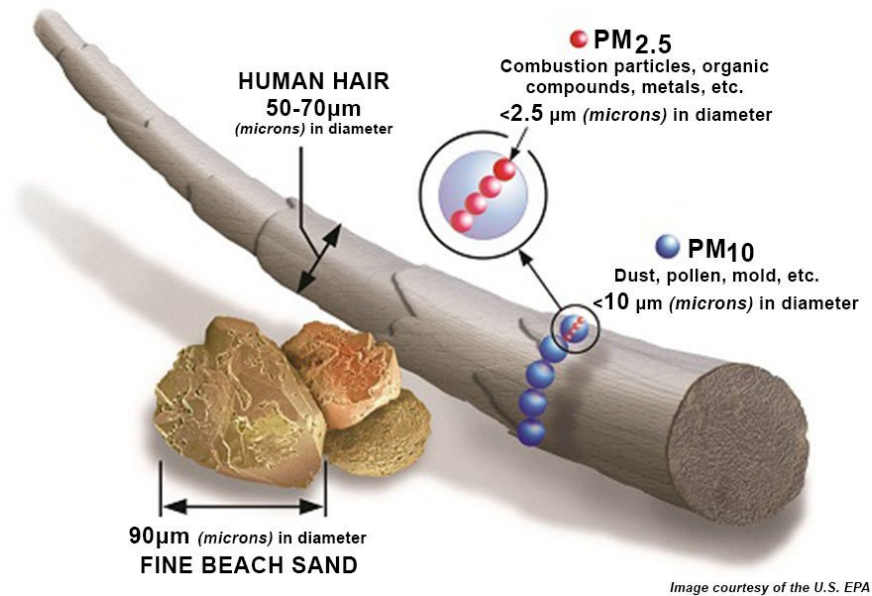


Image #2



## **Sample Newsletter Article**

### **Outdoor exercise is healthy and fun, but check the air quality index first**

Summertime is here and the sunshine and blue skies make it the perfect time to get outside and exercise. Exercising regularly is important for staying healthy, especially if you have heart disease. You can check out new walking trails or biking paths, go on a hike with a family member or friend, or check out an outdoor yoga or tai chi class.

But before you go, anyone with a history of heart disease should first check the air quality in their area. Medical studies show that polluted air, such as smog or wildfire smoke, can trigger heart attacks, stroke or irregular heart rhythms, especially in people who have already had a heart attack or stroke.

Did you know? An estimated 130,000 premature deaths and 180,000 non-fatal heart attacks occur in the U.S. each year due to particle pollution.

Doctors and other health care providers can help their patients understand the risks of air pollution and how to reduce them:

- Check the daily air quality forecast on [AirNow.gov](https://www.airnow.gov) or on weather reports to find out what the air quality is like in your area. The air quality report is color coded. Code orange or above can be harmful to your heart.
- When the air outside is unsafe, delay your activity until the air is cleaner, or move your activity indoors.

- Avoid exercising near busy roads or industrial areas. Particle pollution can be high near busy roads in urban areas, especially during rush hour.
- When the air is polluted, take it a little easier. This will reduce how much pollution you breathe. For example, go for a walk instead of a jog, or reduce your mileage.
- Know the warning signs of heart attack and stroke. If you feel symptoms, even if they go away, stop your activity and seek medical help immediately.

Getting outside to exercise is important. By adjusting when and where you exercise, patients have had a heart attack or stroke can lead a healthier lifestyle and also help reduce their risk of repeat heart problems or stroke triggered by air pollution.

### **Million Hearts® Partner Resources**

#### **American Heart Association (AHA)**

[Air Pollution and Heart Disease, Stroke](#)

[Fact Sheet: Air Pollution and Cardiovascular Disease](#)

#### **Bay Area Air Quality Management District, includes San Francisco**

[Spare the Air](#)

#### **Cardio Smart: American College of Cardiology**

[Air Pollution Accelerates Damage to the Heart's Arteries](#)

[Living an Active Lifestyle: Move More](#)

#### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

[How Air Pollution Harms your Heart and Brain](#)

[Physical Activity Prevents Chronic Disease](#)

#### **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

[Lookup local air quality conditions on AirNow.gov](#)

[Particle Pollution and Cardiovascular Effects](#)

[Healthy Heart Toolkit and Research](#)

[What health care providers should know about particle pollution and cardiovascular risk](#)

[Heart disease, stroke and outdoor air pollution fact sheet](#)

#### **Million Hearts®**

[Particle Pollution and Heart Disease](#)

[Physical Activity and Cardiovascular Disease](#)

#### **National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO)**

[What Health Professionals Should Know About the Cardiovascular Risk of Air Pollution](#)