

Car Idling Negatively Impacts Kids' Health

CHILDREN BREATHING
NIÑOS RESPIRANDO



NO IDLE ZONE
PLEASE TURN YOUR ENGINE OFF
¡POR FAVOR APAGUE SU MOTOR!



Our Health

Car exhaust is not our friend. It has been linked to asthma, and it's an equal opportunity affliction, affecting adults and kiddos alike. In fact, while each adult takes about 20,000 breaths each day, kids breathe 50% more air per pound of body weight with their smaller 'under construction' lungs. So they're especially vulnerable to the pollution emitted from idling vehicles, whether they're inside or outside of it.

Asthma is the most common chronic condition in children, affecting more than 6.2 million children nationally and more than 89,000 kids in Colorado, ages 1 through 14. The symptoms of asthma are worsened by increased car exhaust. As for the affected adult population, Colorado ranks 17th in the country with reported adult asthma.

Idling Fumes



It turns out that idling a gas vehicle for five minutes each day can emit as much as 25 pounds of harmful air pollutants and 260 pounds of carbon dioxide a year. And if we position the fume magnifying glass a little closer to a tail pipe, we find out that idling for even one minute produces as much carbon monoxide as smoking 3 packs of cigarettes! That's not exactly giving kids a healthy start.

The health picture isn't very comforting with diesel exhaust vehicles, either, since this type of exhaust contains very small particles and 40 chemicals that are classified by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as "hazardous air pollutants" under the Clean Air Act. Yuck.

Long-term exposure from diesel exhaust is linked to decreased lung function, cardiac disease, cancer and other serious health problems. Some chemicals in diesel exhaust are also known endocrine disrupters and may play a role in developmental disorders.

For those who think that they and their children are protected from air pollution if they remain inside their cars, think again. According to a report by the International Center for Technology Advancement (CTA), exposure to most car pollutants, including volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and carbon monoxide (CO) is actually much higher inside cars than at road side. VOCs and CO are linked to serious health problems, including respiratory infections and cancer,



and are known to shorten life. According to the report, the highest exposure occurs when sitting in traffic congestion on highways or in a line-up of idling cars at a school or drive-through.



Taking Action

The next time you drop off your kids in front of the school or are waiting to pick them up from recreational activities, remember this: Just one car dropping off and picking up kids at one location dumps three pounds of pollution into the air monthly.

When you stop unnecessary idling and you will:

- Allow kids and adults to breathe more easily
- Help reduce pollutants in our air that also impact our visibility and climate
- Reduce engine wear and tear
- Save money—idling a car for 10 minutes a day uses up more than 27 gallons a year.

For more information on the impacts of car idling, visit fcgov.com/breatheeasy