

# THE POLLUTION EFFECT



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# Foreword

If we can live for a week without water for a week, we can only live for 5 minutes without air. Basically, the clean air that you breathe is composed of 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, and 1% other gases. Unfortunately, due to human activity, the air that allows us to live may now pose a risk in our health.

Air pollution has been a growing public concern globally. It affects everyone regardless of socioeconomic class. Due to the harmful effects that air pollution provides, extensive prevent strategies have already been implemented in various countries around the world in an effort to minimize, if not completely prevent, air pollution.

Although there are some cities that experienced an improved air quality over the past years, there are still some major cities in the world that have very poor air quality. With the cooperation of various international institutions, they have come up with efficient strategies to reduce the effects of air pollution on the ozone layer.

This eBook tackles some of the most effective ways that individuals can do to help in having a fresher and cleaner air to breathe.

## ***The Pollution Effect***

# Chapter 1:

## *Pollution Basics*

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Air pollution is public concern that should never be taken for granted. Individuals should strive to learn how they can help minimize its effects and prevent it from worsening in their own simple ways.

The first step in combating air pollution is to determine its sources and effects. The following are basic information about air pollution:

**What Is Air Pollution?** It is a general term that is used to describe the presence of undesirable amounts of gaseous matter or particles in the atmosphere that can be harmful to all living things. It is often characterized by reddish brown haze. However, there are certain types of air pollution that are invisible but provide serious damages to your health and the environment.

In some instances, poor air quality poses immediate threat. This is one of the reasons why many places throughout the world are monitoring the quality of air in their place around the clock. Governments in various countries are also imposing air quality regulations as a response to the widespread impact of air pollution on society. Understanding what air pollution is made of, where it came from, and its effect on human health and the environment are the key to providing the world with a cleaner air that can be enjoyed by the future generation.

## **Sources of Air Pollution**

Air pollution comes from a variety of sources. There are natural sources and man-made sources. Natural occurrences such as volcanic eruptions, wind-blown dusts, and wildfires can affect the quality of air. Moreover, pollution in the air can also be caused by wood burning fireplaces, agricultural areas, and cities. These area sources are typically composed of smaller pollution sources that can have serious effects when considered as a group.

Other possible sources of air pollution are stationary sources or point sources of pollution. These include oil refineries, factories, power plants, and industrial facilities. Buses, trains, planes, cars, and trucks or mobile sources of pollution account to more than half of the air pollution in the United States. Daily usage of consumer products will also have a negative effect on air quality.

## **Air Pollutants of Main Concern**

There are several air pollutants that will have negative effects on sensitive resources as well as to human health. Being aware of these elements will enable individuals to take the necessary actions in order to prevent or minimize their effects and promote a much better public and environmental health. Some of these air pollutants include:

- **Carbon Monoxide:** This colorless and tasteless gas is produced by incomplete burning of materials containing

carbon. It is a toxic gas that can affect the way oxygen is transported in the blood.

- **Ground-Level Ozone:** This is a secondary pollutant that was produced through the reaction between hydrocarbons, sunlight, and nitrogen dioxide. Higher levels of ozone are typically observed on summertime weather. This type of air pollutant can affect the growth of some sensitive species of plant and also damage plant tissues.
- **Particulate Matter:** Airborne particulate matter is considered as a major concern as it is small enough to penetrate into the lungs, posing serious health risks. Along with Ground-Level Ozone, particulate matter can cause irritation and inflammation of the respiratory system. Road traffic emissions are believed to be one of the primary sources of airborne particulate matter.
- **Sulfur Dioxide:** This is produced whenever the traces of sulfur compounds found in fossil fuels are burned. This can cause significant effects in the ecosystem including changes in water and soil chemistry, acidification, and eutrophication. Moreover, it can also damage the bronchial system.
- **Nitrogen Oxides:** This air pollutant is produced through the mixture of nitrogen dioxide and nitric oxide. It is usually emitted when fuel is burned such as in power generation, transport, and industrial processes.

## **Effects of Air Pollution**

### ***Environmental Effects***

**Haze:** This occurs when tiny pollution particles meet sunlight in the air. It obscures the color, clarity, form, and texture of the things that people see. Meanwhile, there are also haze-causing pollutants that are emitted to the atmosphere through construction activities, power plants, and trucks and automobiles.

**Acidification:** Sulfur and nitrogen are usually carried by fog, snow, and rain into the ecosystem, threatening terrestrial and aquatic resources. When these compounds were deposited from the air, it can cause acidification of the streams, lakes, and soils. This can alter plant communities and disrupt soil nutrient cycling.

**Eutrophication:** Although this is a normal process in the aging of some estuaries and lakes, acceleration of eutrophication due to human activities increases the rates of the nutrients entering the aquatic ecosystem.

**Climate Change:** The atmosphere of the Earth is a balance of natural gases that trap the heat of the sun near the surface of the Earth. However, the production of large amounts of greenhouse gases such methane and carbon dioxide has disturbed this balance,

allowing the average temperature on the planet to increase. Experts believe that global warming caused by climate change will have significant effects not just on the environment but on water resources, agriculture, and human health.

### ***Health Effects***

Several evidences can prove that chronic and acute exposure to air pollution has detrimental effects in human health especially when it is in high concentrations. Individuals who are exposed to this level of air pollutants may suffer have higher chances of experiencing heart attack as well as nose, eye, and throat irritation.

Aside from these, air pollutants can also worsen existing health and lung problems. Not to mention that they may also experience breathing difficulty and chest tightness. Extreme cases of long-term expose to air pollution can lead to cancer and even death. There are instances when individuals may suffer damages in their immunological, respiratory, and immune systems.

Air pollution can affect anyone. That is why everyone one should take the necessary action to somehow reduce their risk. Children, elderly, and those who are suffering from respiratory problems should be aware of the steps to protect their health as they are more susceptible to these health problems than healthy individuals.

# Chapter 2:

## *Alternative Transportation*

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Automobiles and cars are one of the things that cause air pollution. There are certain aspects of driving in congested city traffic that affect the quality of air in certain areas. This is probably why the government is encouraging individuals to take alternative transportation.

The following tackles the importance of alternative transportation in achieving clean air:

Accessibility is a crucial element of prosperity and well-being. The introduction of a better and more convenient modes of transportation have uplifted the lives of individuals in so many ways. It also significantly helped companies in delivering their offered products to the market.

Unfortunately, transportation has adverse effects in the environment and human health. It was regarded as the main source of global pollutants. Studies reveal that transportation accounts for 21% of greenhouse gas emissions in the world. Air pollution from transportation is usually caused by the age of the vehicle or the technology used for its operation, improper use or lack of appropriate fuels, poor vehicle maintenance, and excessive use of vehicles.

Compared to being a private commuter or driving alone, travelling using any modes of public transportation provides less harmful effects on the environment.

Cars are one of the primary contributions to air pollution. This is due to the hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxide released from car exhausts that have a severe effect on air quality. This is even made worse by high traffic levels that are being experienced in various parts of the world especially major cities.

In this regard, conscious efforts have now been made to transport individuals in an eco-friendly manner. There are several forms of green transportation that reduce congestion, help save the planet, and reduce dependence on car. Among the alternative modes of transportation that individuals should consider to help achieve cleaner air are:

- **Pedestrians:** Walking is considered as the most eco-friendly way of transportation as it does not release emission of greenhouse gases. If you live close enough, it would be better if you just walk to school or work. Besides, walking is also an excellent form of exercise.
- **Bicycle:** In cases when walking is not possible, maybe because you are in a hurry or your destination is a bit too far, the best alternative transportation that you can have is biking. Aside from being cheaper than cars, bicycles are also small enough to

enable you to weave through traffic congestion. Moreover, it is also more energy efficient than driving.

- **Carpools:** Also known as multiple occupant vehicles, carpooling is an excellent way to saving money and fuel by minimizing air pollution. To make the most of the benefits that it offers, you have to people who have similar working schedule and route as yours.
- **Hybrid Cars:** If you choose to travel using your own car, it is advisable that you use hybrid ones. This is because hybrid cars use a combination of electricity and gas to operate, giving you amazing gas mileage. By driving hybrid cars, you can also take advantage of the tax credits offered by the government and produce clearer emissions.
- **Electric Vehicles:** Aside from hybrid vehicles, you can also consider electric vehicles are your alternative transportation. What's good about this car is that it does not emit any pollutants when being used. Plus, they also have fewer carbon emissions than conventional cars.
- **Public Transportation:** As a response to the growing concern on air pollution, most major cities in the world have established good infrastructure for their public transport system. This means that commuters can now experience an

affordable green transportation, making it ideal for senior citizens and students.

More savings, better health, and less polluted environment. These are just some of the benefits of using alternative transportation. It also promotes a more sustainable economic development. The next time you are going to travel, consider using any of these modes of transportation and contribute to making the air cleaner.

# Chapter 3:

## *Changing Your Driving Habits*

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Many people nowadays own a certain types of vehicles, some of which have internal combustion engines (ICEs). These ICEs are known to produce particulate matter and harmful gases that create harmful effects on animals, plants, and humans. Due to this, motor vehicles have been hailed as one of the things that greatly produce carbon monoxide emissions.

In some way, changing your driving habits can help lessen the amount of air pollutants in the atmosphere especially the ones created by ICEs. Although there are still certain levels of chemicals in the air that pose significant risks on all living organisms, making an effort to reduce the number of ICEs by changing your driving habits would aid in reducing harmful pollutants.

The following are some of the eco-driving tips that drivers can do to promote clear air:

Being a driver is not just about following traffic rules and ensuring that the car is in great condition prior to hitting the road, Part of the responsibilities of a drive is to ensure that their actions or driving habits provide as little effect to the environment as possible. Below are some driving habits that will not just lessen air pollutants in the air but will also help improve the environment:

***Prevent Idling if Possible:*** If ever you have been assigned to be the driver for the day and was asked to wait in the car, it is advisable that you shut your car engine's off if you are going to wait for more than 60 seconds. This would not just prevent the harmful air pollutants but will also allow you to save fuel by up to 19%.

***Use Fuel-Efficient Car:*** Most air pollution comes from passenger vehicles. Air pollutants such as nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and carbon monoxide are the by-products of the evaporation of fuel and combustion process of the car's engines. In this regard, using a fuel-efficient vehicle is highly recommended.

***Regularly Maintain Your Vehicle:*** You have to make sure that you are regularly maintained and in accordance with the specifications set by its manufacturer. The better your car's condition is, the less pollution it releases. Improving your vehicle's aerodynamics can help improve your fuel efficiency while reducing drag on your engine.

***Drive Less:*** If comfort and convenience is your reason for driving to work or school, there are already different kinds of public transportation that will allow you to travel comfortable and convenience. The less frequent you use your private vehicle, the less air pollutants there is in the atmosphere. The next time you plan to use your car, consider sharing a ride or become a telecommuter. You can also walk or ride a bicycle. As much as possible, you should combine your errands in a single trip when using your car.

***Follow Drive Limit:*** Try to speed down as much as you can. This will allow you to save on fuel while reducing tailpipe emissions. It is also important that you maintain a constant speed. This will make it easier for you to accelerate and decelerate your car. You should also anticipate stops.

# Chapter 4:

## *Using Air Friendly Products*

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As an individual, there are numerous ways that you can do to ensure that you will keep on breathing fresh air. As global warming continuously threatens the lives of all living matter, more and more companies are already manufacturing air friendly products that aim to reverse the damages brought by air pollution. The follow discusses the importance of using air friendly products and know these types of products:

Air friendly products are type of products that are designed to reduce the aspects of air pollution that produce harm to the environment. They keep the air, water and the environment clean and are usually made using natural materials or ingredients.

As mentioned, one way of overcoming various types of environmental hazards such as air pollutants is through the use of eco friendly or air friendly products. In contrast with manufacturing non eco-products that product toxins and pollution, eco friendly products help lessen the amount of pollution from the environment.

### **How to Choose Air Friendly Products?**

Many of the products that individuals use on a daily basis have dangerous chemicals that are lost in the atmosphere when used. For

this reason, it is imperative that you know how to different products that will benefit the environment from those that would create permanent loss or damage.

To make sure that what you choose are eco-friendly products, you have to do the following:

1. *Learn to Read the Label:* Being a responsible shopper means that you know the components of the products that you are going to buy. Air friendly products commonly have the word “CFC-Free” in its label. You have to refrain yourself from purchasing products with HCFCs since they can harm the air and contribute to greenhouse effect.
2. *Look for Healthier Alternatives:* When searching for a particular type of product, consider looking for a much healthier alternative for it. For instance, when buying paint, ask your local retailer if they have paints with low or zero volatile organic compounds since they have the capability to eliminate toxins that are being linked to cancer.
3. *Create Your Own:* There are a lot of sources in the internet that provides DIY guides for creating not just efficient and air friendly products but cost-effective as well. You just have to make sure that you use the exact ingredients needed and be careful when using substitutes.

# Chapter 5:

## *Save Energy*

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Energy conservation now takes the center stage as a response to the increasing concern on climate change. Most of the green building protocols set by international agencies focus on protecting the outside environment and reducing carbon emissions. A lot of environmental organizations are now supporting energy efficiency programs and policies as an effective air quality strategy.

The following are energy saving ideas to reduce air pollution that threatens the environment and the human health:

By reducing the amount of time you use your air conditioning at home, you are also minimizing your power consumption, thereby decreasing the use of coal that pollutes the air. Consider the use of window and ceiling fans to keep you cool while saving on energy. You can also cut your cooling and heating expenses by sealing cracks, heat ducts, and openings to make your home more energy efficient.

### **Minimize Light Use**

One effective way that you can do to control air pollution is to use low energy bulbs that has lower electricity demands. These are the types of bulbs that provide good amount of light while using low electricity. You can also consider using a single lamp in every room of your house and turn off all the lights when not in use.

## **Use Renewable Source of Energy**

Home owners and car owners are now given the opportunity to use green or renewable source of energy. When planning to use it in your car, try finding supplier that offers renewable energy sources.

Moreover, you can also become a responsible driver by having the courage to report smoking vehicles to the corresponding air agency in your area.

# Chapter 6:

## *Recycle*

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Recycle, Reuse, and Reduce! These are the things that you can you to decrease your household wastes and eventually reduce pollution. Before throwing away things, try to determine first if you can use them for other purposes.

The following explores the benefits of recycling:

### ***Reduces Energy Consumption***

Recycling consumes less energy than manufacturing products using raw materials. For instance, companies can save up to 70% energy when they choose to recycle paper than when they produce new ones from new timber. Moreover, they can also save up to 75% energy if they make steel out of old scrap

### ***Reduces Pollution***

Manufacturing products from recycled materials reduces air pollutants and water pollution by 73% and 35%, respectively. Through recycling, industrial plants and factories also contributes to the lessening of greenhouse gas emissions that deplete the ozone layer.

### ***Reduces Litter and Landfill Space***

Garbage and other wastes collected from every household, office, and establishment are being dumped in landfills, most of which take long time to decompose. Landfills are being regarded by many as a ticking time bomb since they produce unknown chemicals and gases.

Recycling can greatly help in minimizing landfill space and reducing disposal costs.

By doing a little research, individuals can already get create and use biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes to other purposes instead of dumping them in landfills. This will not just allow them to help save the planet but also to save money.

# Chapter 7:

## *Use Recycled Products*

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Aside from recycling things on their own with the help of a guide they found on the internet, there is another option that individuals can do to save the planet from pollution – using recycled products.

The following presents the different kinds of recycled products that you can use:

**Paper:** This is probably the most commonly used materials for recycling. As the prices of virgin pulp used in making paper continuous to increase, paper manufacturers are now making the most of the benefits that they can get from reprocessing waste paper.

**Plastics:** Plastics will take years before they can be completely composed. The good news is that a wide of variety of plastics can now be recycled and put to another good use.

**Aluminum and Glasses:** Clear glasses and aluminum can be easily recycled as they do not require complex processes. Most of the time, they just need to be cleaned thoroughly to remove dirt. Contaminations are handled by the high heat used in processing these materials.

## **Misconceptions About Recycled Products**

**Recycled Products Are More Expensive:** Some individuals believe that products made from recycled materials are more expensive than those that are made from virgin materials due to the processes involved in manufacturing them. However, most of the recycled products that are sold in the market are priced competitively if not less than non-recycled products. It would help if you take time determining the price of a recycled product you are planning to buy and compare it with its non-recycled counterpart.

**Recycled Products Have Poorer Quality Than Virgin Ones:** This is one of the most common misconceptions about recycled products. The truth is that products made using recycled materials are as good as those that are made from virgin materials in terms of durability, quality, and reliability. Companies that are selling these types of products make sure that they meet the quality materials set for creating such products.

### **Recycled Products to Try**

1. **Toys:** Green toys serve as the breath of fresh air from the common child toys that are made of plastics and other materials. These toys are usually made from 100% recycled materials such as paper.

2. **Mobile Device Covers:** Smartphone backs made from discarded post-industrial skateboard material are now available to protect your phone and showcase your taste without taking a toll in the environment. Moreover, you can also take advantage of tablet covers that are partly made from recycled materials.
  
3. **Towels:** Have a green kitchen by having towels made using eco-friendly ink and flour sacks. They are also bottle openers that are made from wood.
  
4. **Clothes and Accessories:** Recycled clothing stores are now on the rise. They specialize in processing, grading, and recycling used bags, shoes, and accessories.
  
5. **Bags:** Different types of bags that are made from 100% recycled PET fabric from plastic bottles will allow you to enjoy a durable bag that is Earth-friendly. Among the types of bags that you can take advantage of are backpacks, carry-ons, totes, and duffle bags.

# Chapter 8:

## *Get Involved With Clean Air Groups*

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Clean air groups primarily aims to ensure a safer and cleaner air that the current and future generations will truly appreciate. For those who want to help keep the planet a good place of live, getting involve with clean air groups is a great thing to do.

The following provides a glimpse of the important role played by clean air groups:

Clean air groups play a fundamental role in dealing with environmental issues involving air pollution by conducting studies in order to facilitate policy development and achieve a more sustainable atmosphere. Although several businesses and government agencies have already started taking actions on some of these issues, there are still many gaps that need to be dealt with. Clean air groups aim to fill these gaps.

Clear air groups are open to anyone who wants to help in cleaning up the environment. Their main fields of activities include clear air in the cities, sustainable urban development, and protection of green areas. They are dedicated to exposing the truth behind the air quality in the planet and uniting people to carry out the necessary changes in order to protect the air.

They assist people in addressing the air quality challenges that the world experience. Most of them specialize in transportation such as the ones involving infrastructure and alternative fuels. As part of their efforts to improve air quality, they continually fight for issues on clean air both in the local and national levels.

Getting involved in clean air groups will give you the support and resources that you need to achieve your common goal. Protecting the environment and making the air cleaner will be best achieved if people from different parts of the society work together.

# Chapter 9:

## *What To Avoid*

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A lot of people want to contribute to making the world a safer place to live; the one that is free from pollution. However, not all of them know how to do it right. Most of the time, they are not aware that what they are doing pollute the air instead of making it cleaner.

The following are some of the most common mistakes that people commit when it comes to air pollution control:

- 1. Driving Short Distance:** Most people know that driving contributes of the increase in the amount of carbon dioxide in the air. Yet, many people still choose to use their car even when they are just travelling at a very short distance. If you are just driving to a place around the block, consider taking a walk or riding a bicycle.
- 2. Leaving Appliances Plugged-In Even When Not in Use:** Homeowners often leave their appliances such as TV plugged in thinking that it will not consumer electricity especially since they were in “Off” mode. However, leaving these devices including phone charger plugged in actually consumes electricity that in turn increase air pollution.

3. **Buying Factory-Farmed Meat:** Unknown to many, industrial farming practices produce water and air pollution. In this regard, if more people are patronizing factory-farmed meat, companies will be forced to extend the time they produce these meats in order to meet the demand. As an alternative, consider buying meats of organic fed animals since they produce less carbon dioxide.
  
4. **Taking for Granted the Importance of Trees:** As the world becomes more modernized, different infrastructures are being built. Roads are also continuously being improved to provide individuals with a more comfortable travel. However, in some cases, trees need to be cut in order for these projects to push thru. To offset the impact of air pollution it is highly recommended to preserve and plant more trees.

# Chapter 10:

## *The Benefits Of Clean Air*

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Asthmas and allergies are just some of the respiratory problems that can be addressed by having clean air. Reducing the amount of air pollutants is the most efficient for improve air quality.

The following are some of the benefits of clean air:

### **1. Strengthens Your Respiratory and Immune System**

Breathing clean and fresh air enables the body to function and work properly especially the white blood cells that are responsible for fighting germs and bacteria. Moreover, fresh air also helps in cleansing the lungs, allowing the body to release airborne toxins.

### **2. Makes You Relax and Happier**

The level of serotonin in your body greatly affects your mood. Likewise, the amount of oxygen you inhale also influences your serotonin level. Fresh and clean air can increase your serotonin level, thereby, making you feel happier and more relaxed.

### **3. Improves Heart Rate and Blood Pressure**

Individuals suffering heart problems or blood pressure are commonly advised to stay away from places with high rate of air pollution. This is because polluted atmosphere forces the body

to work harder in order to get the right amount of oxygen that it needs.

#### **4. Promotes Sharper Mind**

The brain needs about 20% of the oxygen in the body in order to function properly. Breathing clean air can help in improving concentration and clearing your mind from all the worries in life. It also allows you to think better.

#### **5. Reduces Infant Mortality Rates**

According to studies, a reduction in air pollution is associated with the increase in the mortality rates of infants. It is revealed that a reduction in the amount of total suspended particulates in the air can also help in reducing infant mortality rate by almost 4%.

These are just some of the benefits that individuals can receive once they stop polluting the environment and start working together to enjoy clean air. The responsibility of preventing pollution does not only rely on the government or advocacy groups. Citizens of the country can do several things in order to prevent the current air pollution from worsening.

As the effects of climate change and global warming are now being experienced in various parts of the world, it has become imperative for all members of the society to start performing their roles in order

to reduce its effects and provide the future generations with a cleaner and safer place to live.

By understanding the things that causes pollution, it would be easier for individuals to think of the best strategies to address this issue one at a time. Preventing pollution may be a difficult task. However, though cooperation, individuals can somehow decrease the effects that it has not just on the environment but also on their lives. Let the future generation experience a better place to live, start making the air fresher and cleaner!

Getting outdoors should not be a burden. It is a privilege that allows you to enjoy what the world has to offer while allowing you to get a dose of clean air!