



## Fact Sheet: Air Pollution & the General Population

*Ozone and particle pollution continue to leave the nation's air hazardous to millions of Americans. Existing levels of ozone and particle pollution can make even healthy adults sick. The numbers of individuals living in areas with dangerous levels of ozone is greater than the report details. Due to the long lead time required, the American Lung Association State of the Air 2008 uses data based on the 1997 ozone air quality standards, which are weaker than those announced by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in March 2008.*

**Two of every five people (42 percent) of the U.S. population live in counties that have unhealthful levels of either ozone or particle pollution.** Almost 125 million Americans live in 216 counties where they are exposed to unhealthful levels of air pollution in the form of either ozone, short-term or year-round levels of particles.

**Nearly one-third of the U.S. population (31 percent) lives in areas with unhealthful levels of ozone.** Counties that were graded F for ozone levels have a combined population of over 92.5 million. One in three Americans live in counties where the monitored air quality places them at risk for premature death, increased asthma attacks, decreased lung function, respiratory infection, lung inflammation and worsening of lung diseases like emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

**Over one quarter of the U.S. population lives in an area with unhealthy short-term levels of particle pollution.** These 81.4 million Americans live in counties where particle pollution spikes to unhealthy levels on too many days. Short-term spikes in particle pollution can last from hours to several days and can increase the risk of heart attacks, strokes and emergency-room visits for asthma and cardiovascular disease, and can increase the risk of premature death.

**One in six people in the United States live in counties with unhealthful year-round levels of particle pollution.** Nearly 50 million Americans suffer from chronic exposure to particle pollution. Even when levels are fairly low, exposure to particles over time can increase risk of hospitalization for asthma, lung cancer, heart attacks and stroke; and can damage the lungs significantly, increasing the risk of premature death.

For more information about air pollution and lung health, contact the American Lung Association at 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or visit [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org).

**About 30.4 million Americans—roughly one in 10 people—live in 18 counties with unhealthful levels of all three: ozone and short-term and year-round particle pollution.**