

HAZE

YOUR GUIDE FOR STAYING HEALTHY

WHAT IS 'HAZE' ?

Haze is a phenomenon or occurrence caused by the accumulation of fine particles in the air which are barely visible to naked eye. These particles may occur naturally or may be an outcome of human activities like open burning or smoky discharges from factories and exhaust of motor vehicles. When these particles accumulate in large quantities and suspend in the air, they can lock out sunlight and visibility will be greatly reduced.

AIR POLLUTANT INDEX (API)

The API is obtained from the measurement of fine particles (below 10 microns) and several gases which are hazardous to health such as carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and ozone. The API is used as a guide for measuring air quality and its effect on health as follows :-

<u>API VALUE</u>	<u>STATUS</u>
0 - 50	Good
51 - 100	Moderate
101 - 200	Unhealthy
201 - 300	Very unhealthy
301 - 500	Dangerous

HAZE THREATENS YOUR HEALTH

Continuous hazy conditions will cause ill effects to all people especially those in the high risk groups such as :-

1. Children
2. The elderly
3. Those with illnesses like, Asthma, Bronchitis, Pneumonia, Chronic lung diseases, Heart diseases and Allergies
4. Cigarette smokers
5. Those who work outdoors most of the time

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HEALTH PROBLEMS AS A RESULT OF EXPOSURE TO THE HAZE?

The effects of continuous exposure to the haze include:-

- Itchy sensation in the throat, and coughing, increased phlegm
- Difficulty in breathing (wheeze) or nose block
- Pain, irritation, red and watery eyes
- Itchy skin rashes

If above symptoms persist, get advice and treatment at the nearest clinic.

PREVENTION OF HAZE-RELATED ILLNESSES

- Close all windows and doors to your bedroom. Boil a kettle (electric) of water in the room and allow the steam to fill the room. Allow 10 - 15 minutes for the fine water vapor (steam) to collect the pollutants / particles in the air and settle down. After this the room should contain healthier air.
- Usage of face and surgical masks are of no use if they are not regularly changed as they can act as a base for bacteria to grow and result in other infections. Only very close fitting masks that do not allow air to enter through the sides of the mask are effective.
- Limit all outdoor activity as far as possible e.g avoid outdoor sport or physical activities.
- Always wash / bathe as soon as you return from outdoors. This will minimize eye / skin irritation. For minor eye irritation try using over the counter eye drops e.g Eye Mo.
- Use your car air-conditioner when traveling in the car.
- Drink a lot of water.
- Smokers are advised to quit smoking.
- Those who suffer from diseases such as flu, bronchitis, asthma, conjunctivitis, heart diseases or chronic lung diseases should seek immediate treatment at the clinic or hospital if their condition worsens.