

11 Health Facts You Need To Know 2025

1. Pittsburgh ranks (tied) for 16th of the top 25 most polluted cities in the nation regarding year-round particle pollution (PM_{2.5}). [1,13]
2. Allegheny County ranks in the top 1 percent of counties in the U.S. for cancer risk from air pollution. [2]
3. Our air poses a significant threat to public health with an increased risk of heart and lung disease, asthma, diabetes, cancer and premature death. The region's air quality poses particular dangers for vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. [1, 3, 6, 11, 12]
4. Asthma, cardiovascular disease and stroke can be aggravated by short-term exposure to particulate pollution. [7]
5. Suspected carcinogens in air pollution are associated with lung cancer, bladder cancer and childhood leukemia. [6]
6. Air pollution may be the cause of neurodevelopmental disorders (autism spectral) and neurodegenerative disorders (Parkinson's, ALS, Alzheimer's), which have increased at alarming rates in recent decades. [6]
7. Low birth weight and developmental effects in babies are linked to chronic exposures to toxic air pollutants and particulate matter. [6]
8. Air pollution has been linked with pregnancy and birth complications, including increased risk of preeclampsia, gestational hypertension and preterm births among women living in Allegheny County. [1]
9. Fine particulate matter may alter metabolism in genetically susceptible populations, leading to higher body mass index (BMI) and obesity. [6]
10. The construction of the Shell Petrochemical facility in Beaver County could erase 30 years' worth of regional air quality improvements and bring a verity of health risks from the VOCs it will emit. [5]
11. Pittsburgh has seen improvements, but is still facing significant challenges with air quality, particularly in terms of fine particulate matter, which poses serious health risks to residents. The city's long-standing issues with industrial emissions and geographical factors contribute to this persistent ranking. [1,13]

Our Region's Air IS STILL POLLUTED

MONITORS SHOW OUR REGION'S POOR AIR IS CAUSED MOSTLY BY LOCAL SOURCES

- In 2024, air quality in the Pittsburgh region was considered "Moderate" (PM_{2.5} 51-100) to "Unhealthy" (PM_{2.5} 101-150) for 202 days due to PM_{2.5} levels, more than half of the year. [3] Air quality unhealthy days decreased 2022-2024 primarily due to a decrease in wildfires and the closure of batteries 1, 2 and 3 at the Clairton plant.
- From 2022-2024, the Liberty/Clairton air monitor registered particulate matter (PM 2.5) concentrations worse than 95% of the U.S. [3]
- From 2022-2024, 7 out of 8 monitors in Allegheny County had annual PM 2.5 levels worse than 50% of the U.S. [3]
- From 2022-2024, 2 out of 3 ozone monitors in Allegheny County were worse than 50% of all monitors in the U.S. [3]

SOURCES

1. ["State of the Air, 2025," American Lung Association, 2025.](#)
2. [National Air Toxics Assessment and Cancer Risk in Allegheny County Pennsylvania Updated – May 2021. Cancer & Environment Network of Southwestern Pennsylvania](#)
3. Pittsburgh's Air Quality Data Analysis by John Graham, Ph. D., Clean Air Task Force 2025.
4. [Circulation: Journal of the American Heath Association, "Particulate Matter Air Pollution and Cardiovascular Disease," Brook et al. June 1, 2010.](#)
5. [Clean Air Council, "Health Impact Assessment of the Shell Chemical Appalachia Petrochemical Complex"](#)
6. [Laden, F.; Schwartz, J.; Speizer, F.; and Dockery, D. "Reduction in Fine Particulate Air Pollution and Mortality: Extended Follow-up of the Harvard Six Cities Study," 2006.](#)
7. [Kurt Straif, Aaron Cohen, Jonathan Sament, "Air Pollution and Cancer"](#) Page 166-168 of the report, "Although the studies were limited in scope, the results indicate that the joint contribution may be substantial."
8. [Pa. Dept. of Health Asthma Prevalence Report 2021](#)
9. ["Case-Crossover Analysis of Air Pollution and Cardiorespirator Hospitalizations: Using Routinely Collected Health and Environmental Data for Tracking](#)
10. [The Lancet Commission on Pollution and Health, Oct. 19, 2017](#)
11. Felton, Julia. ["Pittsburgh Ranks 6th Worst in Pa. for Unhealthy Air Days."](#) TribLIVE, October 5, 2021.
12. Mancini, Maggie. ["Extreme Heat and Air Pollution Doubles Risk of a Fatal Heart Attack, Study Finds."](#) PhillyVoice, July 31, 2023.
13. ["2025 'New Report Finds Pittsburgh Metro Area Residents Are Breathing Some of the Most Polluted Air in the Country'."](#) American Lung Association, April 23, 2025.