



TRANSPORTATION FACTS – Health & Fitness

Health

- A number of B.C. cities, including Nelson, Penticton, Prince George, Vancouver, and Williams Lake, lie within valleys that trap polluted air. Airborne pollutants worsen asthma, impair lung function and can even cause death. In the Lower Mainland, if summers become warmer, "bad air days" and their related health costs will likely increase. In the interior, if winters become warmer, and residents use less wood fuel for heating, air quality may improve.
(Source: http://www.climatechange.gc.ca/plan_for_canada/climate/bc.html)
- Medical researchers at the University of B.C. estimate that air pollution from PM alone causes about 80 premature deaths, 145 hospitalizations, and 350 emergency room visits for respiratory problems -- every year.
(Source: http://www.ec.gc.ca/air/fact_britishcolumbia_e.html)
- A March 2002 study has shown that the threat to human health by PM and other air contaminants in many cities in North America is similar to the health impacts to a nonsmoker of second-hand tobacco smoke where there is a smoker in the home.
(Source: http://www.ec.gc.ca/air/fact_britishcolumbia_e.html)
- It is estimated that about \$1 billion a year in health care costs would be saved if low-emission vehicles became common and sulphur and benzene levels in fuel were reduced. (Source: Lang C, Yarwood G, Lalonde F, Bloxam R. *Environmental and Health Benefits of Cleaner Vehicles and Fuels. Summary Report. Prepared for the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, Task Force on Cleaner Vehicles and Fuels. 1995.*)
- Smog kills more Canadians than car accidents, breast cancer, prostate cancer and melanoma. In fact, more than 5,000 premature deaths per year are caused by ambient air pollution in Canada.
(Source: http://www.ec.gc.ca/press/2002/020403-3_f_e.htm)
- The actions of individual Canadians account for about 28% of our total national GHG emissions – that's almost 6 tonnes per person per year. (Source: http://www.ec.gc.ca/press/2002/020403-3_f_e.htm)
- A study published in the Canadian Journal of Public Health in 1998, concluded that polluted air caused 5,000 additional deaths per year in 11 Canadian cities during the 1980s. Since then, a revised estimate puts the annual national toll at up to 16,000 deaths per year. (Source: "Why this B.C. doctor says cars are killers." *Vancouver Sun. 19 May 2001.*)

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- Urban air quality is becoming a public health issue. Canada may face additional health care costs of \$11 billion to \$38 billion between 1997 and 2020 due to transportation-related emissions. (Source: *Transport Canada*)
- At a global level, estimates of mortality due to air pollution range from about 0.4-1.1% of total annual deaths. (Source: *World Resources Institute. 1998-99 World Resources: A Guide to the Global Environment. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.*)
- Children may be more vulnerable to airborne pollution because their airways are narrower than those of adults. (Source: *York Centre for Applied Sustainability and Pollution Probe. "Clearing the Air" Transportation, Air Quality and Human Health Conference. Toronto, 1996.*)
- Children also have markedly increased needs for oxygen relative to their size. They breathe more rapidly and inhale more pollutant per pound of body weight than do adults. In addition, they may spend more time engaged in vigorous outdoor activities than adults. (Source: *York Centre for Applied Sustainability and Pollution Probe. "Clearing the Air" Transportation, Air Quality and Human Health Conference. Toronto, 1996.*)

Fitness

- The percentage of young people who are overweight has almost doubled in the last 20 years for children aged 6-11 and almost tripled for adolescents aged 12-19. (Source: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/health/reports/physicalactivity/>)
- Regular physical activity improves health in the following ways:
 - Reduces the risk of dying prematurely from heart disease and other conditions;
 - Reduces the risk of developing diabetes;
 - Reduces the risk of developing high blood pressure;
 - Reduces blood pressure in people who already have high blood pressure;
 - Reduces the risk of developing colon and breast cancer;
 - Helps to maintain a healthy weight;
 - Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints;
 - Helps older adults to become stronger and better able to move about without falling;
 - Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety; and
 - Promotes psychological well-being.
 (Source: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/health/reports/physicalactivity/>)
- Another study linked sedentary lifestyles to 23 percent of deaths from major chronic diseases. For example, physical activity has been shown to reduce the risk of developing or dying from heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, and high blood pressure. On average, people who are physically active outlive those who are inactive. (Source: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/health/reports/physicalactivity/>)

- Over the last 20 years, non-motorized trips made by children to school have declined by more than 40%. This precipitous decline may hinder children's social, emotional, and physical development because it impedes their opportunity to engage in spontaneous outdoor physical activity. Furthermore, the absence of positive environmental cues for promoting physical activity may be a contributing factor in the burgeoning epidemic of overweight children. These children now must be chauffeured to places that traditionally were reached by foot or bicycle.
(Source: http://www.physsportsmed.com/issues/2001/02_01/killingsworth.htm)