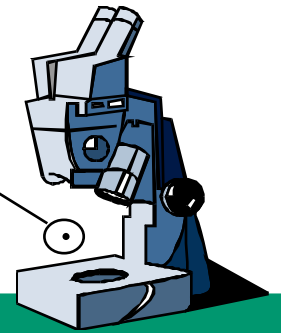


LITTLE  
THINGS  
CAN HURT



# Particulate Matter

You can't see it...  
but it **CAN** harm you!



San Joaquin Valley  
Air Pollution  
Control District

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**A**ir pollution in our Valley affects us all. It is especially harmful to children since their lungs are not fully developed. It also impacts the elderly and anyone with respiratory problems such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema or individuals who are in fragile health.

Most people think that air pollution forms only in the summer. While ground-level ozone can become dangerous during the summer months, particulate matter is a serious problem during the winter months. That's why your Valley Air District wants you to know that **particulate matter (PM)** is among the most harmful of all air pollutants.

## 1 WHY IS PARTICULATE MATTER HARMFUL?

Particulate matter is made of tiny particles of soot, dust, or other materials, including droplets of liquid. These particles are much smaller than we can see (*seven times smaller than the width of a single strand of hair*). Because these particles are so tiny, they can easily invade the body's natural defense system and lodge deep in our lungs. This can cause damage to our lungs.

## 2 SOURCES

Common sources of particulate matter are:

- ♦ **diesel engines**
- ♦ **power plants**
- ♦ **industries**
- ♦ **fireplaces**
- ♦ **woodstoves**
- ♦ **wind-blown dust**

## 3 HEALTH EFFECTS

Seasonal allergies can be confused with the effects of air pollution. Check with your doctor if you are experiencing:

- ♦ **headaches**
- ♦ **eye irritation**
- ♦ **coughing**
- ♦ **throat irritation**
- ♦ **aggravated sinuses**

## 4 HOW DOES THE DISTRICT HELP?

The Valley Air District adheres to the standards determined by the Environmental Protection Agency to help reduce the levels of PM and air pollution by implementing programs for:

- ♦ **Dust control**
- ♦ **Smoking vehicles**
- ♦ **Wood burning**
- ♦ **Agricultural burning**

## 5 YOU CAN HELP TOO!

To help reduce the levels of air pollution and particulate matter that affects you and your family:

- ♦ **Avoid using your fireplace when air pollution levels are elevated.**
- ♦ **Drive slowly on unpaved roads and other dirt surfaces.**
- ♦ **Avoid using leaf blowers and other equipment that creates dust.**

The medical costs associated with the effects of Particulate Matter are estimated at nearly \$4 billion each year. Another \$3 billion is lost from missed work and school.

## SUFFERING FROM A RESPIRATORY ILLNESS?

- ♦ **Get regular check-ups.**
- ♦ **Limit outdoor activities on poor air quality days.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:



The Valley Air District  
1990 E. Gettysburg Avenue  
Fresno, CA 93726  
(559) 230-6000  
Web site: [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org)