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The Importance of Good Air Quality by William Hauselberg

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The air you breathe is made up of primarily nitrogen and oxygen, along with smaller levels of substances like carbon dioxide and argon. Without the right balance of elements, especially adequate amounts of oxygen, most living creatures would cease to exist. Unfortunately, factors like an increased need for energy and a growing population contribute to serious issues with unclean air, or air pollution. Unclean air is caused by sources from car exhaust, to the creation of energy from coal-fired power plants. Unclean air then impacts both human health, as well as the health of the environment.

How Pollution is Monitored

In order to improve air quality and control pollution, organizations like the EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards regularly take part in air quality monitoring. Air quality monitoring is performed through ambient air monitoring, which measures the types of pollutants in the air, ranging from carbon monoxide to lead. These pollutants are then broken down and placed into one of two standards of air quality, primary or secondary, based on the effects they cause.

Primary Standards

Primary standards of air quality revolve around controlling pollutants which cause harmful health effects. For example, nitrogen dioxide is a common cause of air pollution created by cars and power plants. When in high enough levels, this pollutant can cause airway inflammation in even healthy individuals, and serious respiratory problems for those with asthma. Carbon monoxide, lead and sulfur dioxide also fall within primary standards. Unclean air due to these pollutants can not only cause respiratory problems, but also contributes to heart and lung diseases, and increases risks for premature death, according to the EPA.

Secondary Standards

Secondary standards of air quality revolve around controlling pollutants which cause harm to the environment. For example, ozone, one of the primary substances that make up smog, can create severe environmental side effects. These effects include damage to plants and trees, as well as an effect on crop health and crop yields. Greenhouse gasses like carbon dioxide and methane also affect air quality, and contribute to the environmental impacts of global warming.

While the current population may only see limited impacts on air quality, the problem will continue to get exponentially worse for future generations unless we take steps to improve air quality. While actions like recycling, or driving your car less often may seem small now, when you multiply these actions by the hundreds of millions of people in the United States, the results are earth-saving.

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William Hauselberg - About Author:
The author has an immense knowledge on a Air quality monitoring. Know more about a improve air quality related info in his website.

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