



Air pollution and extreme weather, such as big storms and heat waves, harm the health of Maryland’s citizens.

- **Every year, air pollution contributes to the top four leading causes of death in Maryland.¹**
- **About half of all deaths in Maryland are due to heart disease, cancer, stroke and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease – conditions made worse by air pollution.¹**
- **Air pollution is thought to contribute to asthma suffered by one in nine children in Maryland.²**
- **Poor air quality is associated with higher risk of pre-term birth and birth defects.³**
- **One third of the Chesapeake Bay’s nitrogen pollution comes from airborne deposition. A significant portion of this comes from cars and trucks on Maryland’s roads and highways.⁴**

A [survey report conducted by George Mason University](#) found that the vast majority of Marylanders know that climate change affects their health. The report finds:

- **A majority of Maryland residents say that breathing and respiratory problems, injuries from extreme weather and heat stroke are likely to become more common due to climate change.**
- **63 percent of Marylanders say climate change is a moderate or major risk to their own health.**
- **In recent years, Marylanders have grown more aware of the risks of exposure to chemicals, polluted drinking water and air pollution.**
- **Almost three-quarters of Maryland residents say that coal is hazardous to human health.**

What is Maryland doing to improve the health of citizens?

By cleaning up our air, Maryland residents will be able to breathe easier and limit their exposure to

the harmful effects of pollution. This is being done by investing in clean energy sources like wind and solar technologies, as well as the state’s EmPOWER Maryland initiative to promote energy efficiency (see our Clean Energy section for more). Other key programs to promote clean air for the public’s health are:

- **The Maryland Healthy Air Act:** This law took effect in 2009 and aims to curb the emissions of nitrous oxide, sulfur dioxide and mercury from power plants. It is known as one of the most stringent emissions laws on the East Coast and, according to the [Maryland Department of the Environment](#), has greatly reduced these targeted pollutants.
- **The Maryland Clean Cars Act:** Passed in 2007 and enacted for vehicle model year 2011, this law adopted California’s strict vehicles emissions standards, which directly regulate carbon dioxide emissions.
- **Electric Cars:** Maryland set a goal to have 60,000 electric vehicles (EVs) in the state by 2020. EV charging opportunities are everywhere, starting with 120V wall or garage sockets at home. There is a large and rapidly growing network of charging stations at workplaces, convenience stores, malls and other retail locations, transit stations, airports, leisure destinations and along highways. These provide faster charges – as little as 20 minutes at locations that serve long-distance travel. Last year, the state established a \$1 million public-private grant program to build a [statewide network](#) of Level-3 fast charge electric vehicle charging stations.
- **Bike to Work Day:** The Baltimore region recently held its 18th annual Bike to Work Day to promote better health for commuters and raise awareness of the poor air quality in the area.



Healthy People

What can I do to Help?

- Bike, walk or take public transportation in your daily travels as opposed to driving.
- When buying a new car, try electric or hybrid. Maryland was named [among the top 10 states](#) with the best electric car incentives – click [here](#) to learn about federal and state tax credits for purchasing a plug-in electric vehicle.
- Support current and future legislative initiatives that expand Maryland's renewable energy resources and energy efficient technologies, as well as public



Resources for more information

Climate Communication Consortium of Maryland: <http://www.climatemaryland.org/>

Sierra Club Maryland: <http://maryland.sierraclub.org/>

Maryland Environmental Health Network: <http://mdehn.org/>

Clean Air Partners: <http://www.mwcog.org/environment/air/partners/>

Maryland Clean Cars Program: <http://www.mde.state.md.us/programs/Air/MobileSources/CleanCars/Pages/index.aspx>

References:

¹Maryland Vital Statistics Annual Report, 2012. Available at <http://www.dhmh.maryland.gov/vsa/Documents/12annual.pdf>

²Centers for Disease Control, Child Current Asthma prevalence Rate by State or Territory: BRFSS 2013. Available at www.cdc.gov/asthma/brfss/2013/child/c4.pdf

³Nieuwenhuijsen and others. Environmental risk factors of pregnancy outcomes: A summary of recent meta-analyses of epidemiological studies. Environmental Health, 2013, 12:6. Available at <http://www.ehjournal.net/content/12/1/6>

⁴Chesapeake Bay Foundation: <http://www.cbf.org/about-the-bay/issues/air-pollution>, <http://www.cbf.org/about-the-bay/issues/dead-zones/nitrogen-phosphorus>