



Inspiring Albertans one simple act at a time

June 2013

## Air on the Side of Health

Clean air is important for all living things on Earth. Hold your breath and see how long you can hold it. It is the first of our basic needs for survival, next to water, food and shelter.

People can improve air quality by reducing the amount of pollutants that are emitted into the air. Two simple actions that many people can choose to do are to drive less and try to be idle-free whenever possible. We can also use transportation smarter by carpooling, using public transit, walking or riding bicycles.

### Why Transportation?

Motor vehicles are an integral part of Canadian lifestyles. They help us get to work, or in some cases do our work, as well as travel, visit friends or family, and get our groceries. However, vehicle emissions contribute to a variety of environmental issues such as damage to plants, soil and water, and sometimes interference with animal reproduction. Vehicle emissions can also pose a problem to human health, by contributing to respiratory or cardiovascular issues and some cancers.

### Do you know your AQHI?

AQHI stands for Air Quality Health Index. Air quality information is available for 24 communities in Alberta. Find your community's AQHI [here](#). Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, air quality management zones, Environment Canada, and industry operate a comprehensive network of over 140 air quality monitoring stations across Alberta that measure the ambient air quality.

### Did you know?

At the earth's surface, air consists of 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, less than 1% of argon, a very small amount (0.03%) of carbon dioxide, and traces of other gases such as methane and oxides of nitrogen. Water vapour is present in air in varying amounts and tiny particles of dust, sea salt, volcanic ash and soot which float in the air for a long time.

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