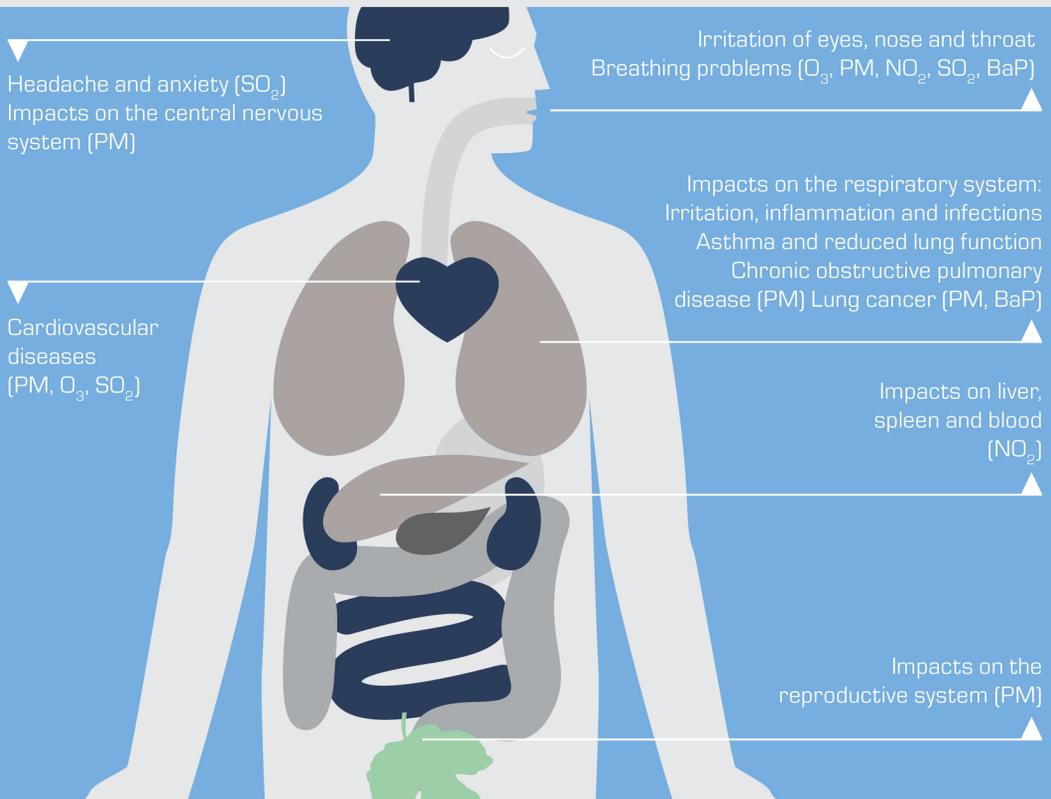




Health impacts of air pollution

Air pollutants can have a serious impact on human health. Children and the elderly are especially vulnerable.



Particulate matter (PM) are particles that are suspended in the air. Sea salt, black carbon, dust and condensed particles from certain chemicals can be classed as a PM pollutant.

Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) is formed mainly by combustion processes such as those occurring in car engines and power plants.

Ground-level ozone (O_3) is formed by chemical reactions (triggered by sunlight) involving pollutants emitted into the air, including those by transport, natural gas extraction, landfills and household chemicals.

Sulphur dioxide (SO_2) is emitted when sulphur containing fuels are burned for heating, power generation and transport. Volcanoes also emit SO_2 into the atmosphere.

Benzo(a)pyrene (BaP) originates from incomplete combustion of fuels. Main sources include wood and waste burning, coke and steel production and motor vehicles' engines.

97%

of Europeans are exposed to O_3 concentrations above the World Health Organization recommendations.

EUR 220-300

is how much air pollution from the 10 000 largest polluting facilities in Europe cost each EU citizen in 2009.

63%

of Europeans say they reduced their car use in the last two years in order to improve air quality.