# London's toxic air

## A deadly problem

LUNGS

Toxic air contributes to thousands of early deaths each year in our capital city<sup>1</sup>. Particulate air pollution (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) was estimated to be responsible for 6.5% of all adult deaths in the London region in 2017<sup>2</sup>. Road transport (particularly diesel vehicles) produces particulate matter and toxic gases and is responsible for a large proportion of London's air pollution.

## Air pollution damages our health

Air pollution is linked to asthma<sup>3</sup>, heart disease<sup>4</sup>, strokes<sup>5</sup> and lung cancer<sup>6</sup>. There are suggested links to brain<sup>7</sup> and breast cancers<sup>8</sup>, diabetes<sup>9</sup>, dementia<sup>10</sup>, impaired memory<sup>11</sup>, reduced ability to learn<sup>12</sup>, poorer exam performance<sup>13</sup>, mental health problems including bipolar disorder and schizophrenia<sup>14</sup>, depression<sup>15</sup> and teenage psychotic episodes<sup>16</sup>.

### The young and old are particularly vulnerable

Maternal exposure can result in premature<sup>17</sup> and low birth-weight babies<sup>18</sup>. Inhaled tiny carbon particles have even been found in mothers' placentas<sup>19</sup>. Children living in highlypolluted areas of London are more likely to have reduced lung growth<sup>20</sup>. In old age, a lifetime of exposure can result in reduced life expectancy<sup>21</sup>, an increased risk of stroke<sup>22</sup> and heart attacks<sup>23</sup>.

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## What you can do to improve local air quality & your family's health

#### Walk, cycle, scoot - don't pollute

Ditch the car for short trips to school and the shops. Use public transport or your bike for longer trips.

#### If you have to use a car, consider buying a cleaner one

Use an app or TfL's ULEZ Vehicle Checker to find the least-polluting electric or hybrid option. Or try car-sharing.

### Don't idle

Turn off your engine at railway crossings, traffic lights and in heavy traffic. Keeping it switched off until you're ready to drive will use less fuel, save you money & reduce pollution.

#### Keep away from the kerb

...when walking along busy roads or waiting at bus stops. Take quieter roads wherever possible.

#### Stop using wood-burning stoves and open fires

... because they produce significant amounts of harmful particulate matter.

#### **Rethink home deliveries**

Group your deliveries or collect them from a locker. Choose delivery companies that use cleaner vehicles. Better still, shop locally on foot and by bike.

#### Join Mums for Lungs & help us campaign for cleaner air!

Email: mumsforlungs@gmail.com Facebook: MumsforLungs Website: mumsforlungs.org Twitter: @MumsForLungs



We are Mums for Lungs, a network of parents campaigning for cleaner air for all Londoners.