

Air Quality Health Index (AQHI)

February 19, 2010



Hamilton

Agenda

1. What is AQHI?
2. How does AQHI work?
3. City of Hamilton PHS AQHI
Communication Initiative 2010
4. Where to get information
5. Feedback Form



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What is AQHI?

- AQHI is a scale to help us understand what effect the local air pollution levels may have on our health



At Risk Population

- At risk group includes those individuals sensitive to air pollution such as:
 - Young children
 - The elderly
 - People with existing respiratory conditions such as:
 - Asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) including bronchitis and emphysema or lung cancer



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At Risk Population

- People with existing cardiovascular conditions such as:
 - Angina
 - Previous heart attack
 - Congestive heart failure or heart rhythm problems (arrhythmia or irregular heartbeat)



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How Does AQHI Work?

Health Risk	Air Quality Health Index	Health Messages	
		At Risk Population*	General Population
Low	1 - 3	Enjoy your usual outdoor activities.	Ideal air quality for outdoor activities.
Moderate	4 - 6	Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you are experiencing symptoms.	No need to modify your usual outdoor activities unless you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.
High	7 - 10	Reduce or reschedule strenuous activities outdoors. Children and the elderly should also take it easy.	Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.
Very High	Above 10	Avoid strenuous activities outdoors. Children and the elderly should also avoid outdoor physical exertion.	Reduce or reschedule strenuous activities outdoors, especially if you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.



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Source: Environment Canada

City of Hamilton PHS AQHI Communication Initiative 2010

- The AQHI will be rolled out in 2011 for Hamilton
- PHS is working on a communication strategy to provide information about the AQHI such that individuals can make decisions to protect their health based on the health risks associated with local air pollution levels
- Your feedback is very important to us since it will guide the communication strategy and the most effective means can be implemented



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Where to get Information

- More information is available at Environment Canada's website:
www.airhealth.ca



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