

## Impact of The Environment on Human Health

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### ABSTRACT

*This article discusses the impact of ecology and the environment on human life and health. The catastrophic effects of polluted air and various radiation as a result of environmental disasters have been analyzed.*

**KEYWORDS:** ecology, environment, human health, environmental tragedies, radiation

### INTRODUCTION

People tend to attribute their illnesses to radiation and the harmful effects of other environmental pollutants. However, the impact of ecology on human health in the world today is only 25-50% of the totality of all influencing factors. And only after 30-40 years, according to experts, the dependence of the physical condition and well-being of citizens of the Russian Federation on the environment will increase to 50-70%.

The lifestyle that they lead has the greatest influence on the health of Russians (50%). Among the components of this factor:

- nature of food,
- good and bad habits,
- physical activity,
- neuropsychic state (stress, depression, etc.).

In second place in terms of the degree of influence on human health is such a factor as ecology (25%), in third - heredity, which is as much as 20%. The remaining 5% is accounted for by medicine. However, there are cases when the action of several of these 4 factors of influence on human health are superimposed on each other.

First example: medicine is practically powerless when it comes to ecologically dependent diseases. In Russia, there are only a few hundred doctors specializing in diseases of chemical etiology - they will not be able to help all victims of environmental pollution. As for ecology, as a factor affecting human health, when assessing the degree of its influence, it is important to take into account the scale of environmental pollution:

- global environmental pollution is a disaster for the entire human society, but for one individual it does not pose a particular danger;
- regional environmental pollution is a disaster for the inhabitants of the region, but in most cases it is not very dangerous for the health of one particular person;
- local environmental pollution is a serious danger both for the health of the population of a particular city / district as a whole, and for each specific inhabitant of this area.

Following this logic, it is easy to determine that the dependence of human health on the air pollution of a particular street on which he lives is even higher than on the pollution of the area as a whole. However, the strongest impact on human health is the ecology of his home and work space. After all, we spend about 80% of our time in buildings. And in the premises, the air, as a rule, is dry, there is a significant concentration of chemical pollutants in it: by the content of radioactive radon - 10 times (on the first floors and in basements - possibly hundreds of times); in terms of air ion composition - 5–10 times.

Thus, it is extremely important for human health:

- on which floor does he live (on the first, the probability of exposure to radioactive radon is higher),
- what material is his house built of (natural or artificial),
- what kind of stove does he use (gas or electric),
- what is the floor in his apartment / house covered with (linoleum, carpets or less harmful material);
- what the furniture is made of (SP-contains phenols);
- whether indoor plants are present in the dwelling, and in what quantity.

Atmospheric air is one of the basic vital elements of our environment. A person inhales about 12-15 m<sup>3</sup> of oxygen per day, and emits about 580 liters of carbon dioxide.

In children living near powerful power plants that are not equipped with dust collectors, changes in the lungs similar to forms of silicosis are found. Dust containing silicon oxides causes a serious lung disease called silicosis. Excessive air pollution with smoke and soot lasting for several days can cause fatal poisoning in people. Particularly detrimental to humans is atmospheric pollution in cases where meteorological conditions contribute to stagnation of air over the city.

The harmful substances contained in the atmosphere affect the human body in contact with the surface of the skin or mucous membranes. This happens when a sweating person (with open pores) in the summer walks along a gassed and dusty street. If, upon reaching home, he does not immediately take a warm (not hot!) Shower, harmful substances have a chance to penetrate deep into his body.

Along with the respiratory system, pollutants affect the organs of sight and smell, and by acting on the lining of the larynx, they can cause spasms of the vocal cords. Inhaled solid and liquid particles with a size of 0.6-1.0 microns reach the alveoli and are absorbed in the blood, some accumulate in the lymph nodes.

Polluted air irritates most of the respiratory tract, causing bronchitis, emphysema, asthma. The irritants that cause these diseases include SO<sub>2</sub> and SO<sub>3</sub>, nitrogen fumes, HCl, HNO<sub>3</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>S, phosphorus and its compounds. Studies in the UK have shown a very close relationship between air pollution and mortality from bronchitis.

Signs and consequences of the effects of air pollutants on the human body are manifested mainly in a deterioration in general health: headaches, nausea, a feeling of weakness appear, and the ability to work is reduced or lost.

It can be concluded that the largest amount of pollutants enters the human body through the lungs. Indeed, most researchers confirm that every day from 15 kg of inhaled air, more harmful substances penetrate into the human body than with water, with food, from dirty hands, through the skin. At the same time, the inhalation route of entry of pollutants into the body is also the most

dangerous. Due to the fact that:

- the air is polluted by the widest range of harmful substances, some of which can intensify the harmful effects of each other;
- pollution, entering the body through the respiratory tract, bypasses such a protective biochemical barrier as the liver - as a result, their toxic effect is 100 times stronger than the influence of pollutants entering through the gastrointestinal tract;
- the assimilation of harmful substances entering the body through the lungs is much higher than that of pollutants penetrating through food and water.

It is difficult to hide from atmospheric pollutants: they affect human health 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The main causes of deaths caused by air pollution are cancer, congenital pathologies, and disruption of the immune system of the human body. Inhaling air containing combustion products (thin diesel exhaust), even for short periods of time, for example, increases the risk of coronary heart disease.

Industrial plants and vehicles emit black smoke and greenish yellow dioxide, which increase the risk of early death. Even the relatively low concentration of these substances in the atmosphere causes 4 to 22 percent of deaths before the age of forty.

Exhaust from road transport, as well as emissions from coal-burning enterprises, saturate the air with tiny particles of pollution that can cause increased blood clotting and the formation of blood clots in the human circulatory system. Contaminated air also increases pressure. This is because air pollution causes changes in the part of the nervous system that controls blood pressure. Air pollution in large cities accounts for about five percent of hospitalizations.

Large industrial cities are often covered with a thick fog - smog. This is a very strong air pollution, which is a thick fog with admixtures of smoke and waste gas or a veil of corrosive gases and aerosols of increased concentration. This phenomenon is usually observed in calm weather. This is a very big problem in large cities, which negatively affects human health. Smog is especially dangerous for children and elderly people with a weakened body, suffering from cardiovascular diseases and diseases of the respiratory system. The highest concentration of harmful substances in the surface air is observed in the morning; during the day, smog rises under the influence of ascending air currents.

A very dangerous symptom for humanity is that air pollution increases the likelihood of having children with developmental disabilities. The prohibitive concentration of harmful substances in the atmosphere causes premature birth, newborns are low in weight, sometimes dead children are born. If a pregnant woman breathes air containing high concentrations of ozone and carbon monoxide, especially in the second month of pregnancy, she has three times the ability to give birth to a child with such a developmental defect as a cleft lip, cleft palate, defects of the heart genesis. The future of humanity depends on clean air, water, and forests. Only the right attitude to nature will allow future generations to be healthy and happy.

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