

Indoor air quality improved with state smoking ban, study finds

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Air quality in Wisconsin restaurants and bars improved by more than 92 percent as a result of the Wisconsin Smoke-Free Act, according to a study released today by the University of Wisconsin Carbone Cancer Center (UWCCC).

[The study](#) analyzed air-quality data recorded in more than 200 establishments before and after implementation of the new law.

Average small-particle levels, caused by [cigarette smoke](#), fell from 160 micrograms per /cubic meter to 13 cubic meters.

Before the law, air quality in 21 percent of all tested establishments was hazardous, (the most dangerous level) according to air-quality standards of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Air quality in another 28 percent was very unhealthy and 38 percent of the sites were unhealthy. Only 13 percent had air quality that was either good or satisfactory.

After the law was enacted, more than 97 percent of the restaurants and bars had good or satisfactory air quality.

"Wisconsin has made a seismic leap going from hazardous air in bars and restaurants to healthy air quality, all because of the law that went into effect this past July," said UW Carbone Cancer Center researcher David Ahrens, the study author.

The data for this study was collected by public-health agencies in communities around the state. Air-testing equipment collected air samples in the same establishment before and after the smoke-free law went into effect.

Most of the testing took place on Friday and Saturday nights when the greatest number of employees and patrons might be exposed to [secondhand smoke](#).

Ahrens noted, "The link between exposure to secondhand smoke and illness has been well-established by hundreds of scientific studies and unfortunately, our day-to-day experience. The improvement in [air quality](#) in thousands of eating and drinking establishments is a significant, immediate and long-term advance in the public's health. Many employees and patrons will avoid serious illness and potentially death as a result of the clearing of the air."

Provided by University of Wisconsin-Madison

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