

As traffic piles up, so does air pollution

September 12 2016



(HealthDay)—Stuck in traffic? Shut your car windows and turn your ventilation system to re-circulate air, researchers advise.

Doing so can reduce your exposure to toxic [air pollution](#) from a traffic jam by up to 76 percent, a new study suggests.

"Where possible and with weather conditions allowing, it is one of the best ways to limit your exposure by keeping windows shut, fans turned off and to try and increase the distance between you and the car in front while in traffic jams or stationary at traffic lights," said study senior author Prashant Kumar.

"If the fan or heater needs to be on, the best setting would be to have the air re-circulating within the car without drawing in air from outdoors," Kumar, who's with the University of Surrey in England, said in a university news release.

The investigators also found that pedestrians are exposed to high levels of vehicle air pollution at traffic lights.

A previous study led by Kumar found that when stopped at [traffic lights](#), drivers are exposed to up to 29 times more harmful air pollution particles than when in free-flowing traffic.

According to the World Health Organization, [outdoor air pollution](#) is among the top 10 health risks faced by humans, and it has been linked to 7 million premature deaths a year, the news release noted.

The new study was published online recently in the journal *Environmental Science: Processes and Impacts*.

More information: The American Lung Association has more on [air pollution](#).

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Citation: As traffic piles up, so does air pollution (2016, September 12) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-09-traffic-piles-air-pollution.html>

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