

Move to electric vehicles could prevent millions of child asthma attacks each year

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If all cars and trucks sold in America were "zero emission" by 2040 and the country's electric grid was also powered by clean energy, nearly 2.8 million child asthma attacks would be prevented annually, a new report

finds.

The American Lung Association (ALA) [report](#) also estimates that with cleaner air, 508 infant lives would also be saved each year.

A nationwide shift to [clean energy](#) would also result in:

- almost 2.7 million fewer cases of upper respiratory illnesses in kids annually
- Almost 1.9 million fewer cases of lower respiratory pediatric illnesses
- 147,000 fewer cases of bronchitis in kids

"Air pollution harms children's health and well-being today, and the transportation sector is a leading source of air pollution," said ALA president Harold Wimmer. "Vehicle emissions are also nation's biggest source of carbon pollution that drives climate change and associated public health harms."

It's not just about the direct effect of auto exhaust on young lungs, Wimmer stressed.

Fossil fuels are also a key driver of climate change, which is having its own effects on child health, he explained.

"As families across the country have experienced in recent months, climate change increases air pollution, [extreme weather](#), flooding events, allergens, as well as heat and drought, leading to greater risk of wildfires," Wimmer said in an ALA news release.

"Kids are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. As the impacts of climate change intensify, the risks to children's health and future will continue to grow," he added. "This is why the American Lung

Association is working hard to advocate for solutions to transition to a zero-emission future."

The new report estimated the health impact for kids if all U.S. cars became zero-emission by 2035; all trucks became [zero-emission](#) by 2040, and there was a concurrent shift of the electrical grid to "clean, non-combustion renewable energy" by 2035.

According to the ALA's 2023 "State of the Air" report, over 27 million American children and teens currently reside in a county with unhealthy levels of at least one air pollutant. Kids from poor and/or minority families are more likely to be living in these counties.

That includes 1.7 million kids with asthma—a group especially vulnerable to the health effects of dirty air.

"Policymakers have the power to support [children's health](#) by cutting harmful air pollution and [climate change](#) that threatens their future," the ALA said.

More information: Find out more about air pollution's effects on health at the [University of Rochester Medical Center](#).

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