



## News Release

**For Immediate Release**

May 27, 2009

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### **Summer's Coming – and so is the Ozone**

*Why Utahns should keep an 'eye on the skies'*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Departments of Health (UDOH) and Environmental Quality (DEQ), in cooperation with other community partners, have teamed up to develop recommendations for outdoor physical activity in the summertime that avoid unhealthy exposure to summertime ozone air pollution.

Ozone is created by the sun's heat and light acting upon gases and pollution in the atmosphere. Exposure to high summer ozone levels can cause coughing, wheezing, chest tightness, increased allergy and asthma symptoms, and eye, nose, or throat irritation.

The severity of symptoms can vary depending on a person's sensitivity to ozone, and can be felt immediately or as late as one or more days after exposure. People with heart and lung conditions, children, seniors and people who work or exercise outdoors can be more sensitive to ozone.

"Ozone levels change throughout the day," says DEQ toxicologist Steve Packham, Ph.D. "They are typically higher in the afternoon hours."

To help Utahns plan outdoor activities during ozone season, new UDOH and DEQ guidelines recommend:

- The best time for outdoor summer physical activity is before noon or after 6:00 pm.
- If you are physically active between noon and 6:00 pm:

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- Consider light to moderate activity (i.e. walking instead of running).
- Consider indoor activities
- Discuss physical activities with your doctor, especially if you have a lung disease or heart condition.

The agencies have also developed new materials to help Utahns assess their sensitivity to ozone. Available online, they include *Recommendations for Outdoor Physical Activity During Ozone Season (May – September)*, a form to help people with lung disease track the symptoms they experience during outdoor activities.

“By tracking your symptoms and keeping an eye on ozone levels, you can better understand how you react to it and plan your days to reduce your exposure,” said Rebecca Jorgensen, UDOH Asthma Program.

In addition, DEQ provides hourly ozone level updates on its website at [www.airquality.utah.gov](http://www.airquality.utah.gov).

A copy of the physical activity recommendations, ozone air quality fact sheets and the symptom tracking chart are available at [www.health.utah.gov/asthma](http://www.health.utah.gov/asthma) or by calling the UDOH Health Resource Line at 1-888-222-2542.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public’s health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*