



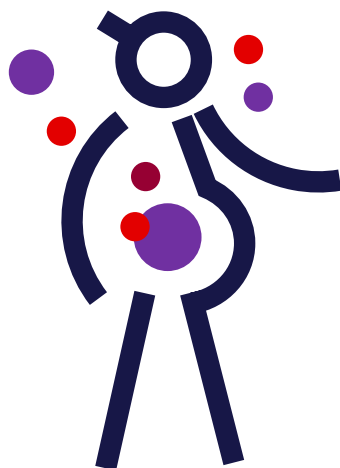
Fact Sheet for health risks to pregnant women

Key Facts

When a pregnant woman breathes polluted air, the harmful particulate matter can reach the placenta and harm the fetus which is particularly susceptible to environmental pollutants.

Studies have shown that chronic exposure to high levels of PM 2.5 (particulate matter with a median diameter of less than 2.5 microns, approximately one thirtieth the width of average human hair) is associated with higher rates of early fetal loss, infant mortality, preterm delivery, intrauterine growth restriction, lower birth weight¹, congenital anomalies and even childhood respiratory problems².

**PM
2.5 μ**



Beside increasing the risk of miscarriage, premature birth and low birthweight, exposure to air pollution for a pregnant woman and her baby can lead to long-term consequences.

Studies have shown that exposure to high levels of air pollution can adversely affect children's brain development, cognitive development and IQ levels^{3/4}.

What can you do to protect your health and health of your baby?

- Pay attention to the quality of air around you —check the Air Quality Index (AQI) in your area on airqualitykosova.rks-gov.net and ihmk-rks.net/ajri or download the **Air Quality in Kosovo** smartphone app by scanning the QR code below.
- Stay away from smoke and avoid being outside when the air quality is poor, very poor or extremely poor. If you must go out when the AQI is poor, it is recommended that a suitable mask is used.
- Improve & maintain good health and strengthen your immune system. Maintain a healthy diet with lots of fruit and vegetables.
- Talk to your doctor if you are concerned or have continued or recurring symptoms on poor air quality days.

For health related recommendations visit ajri.niph-rks.org



iOS



Android

Download the free smartphone app for real-time information on air pollution.

¹ https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_Clear_the_Air_for_Children_30_Oct_2016.pdf

² <https://www.intechopen.com/books/air-pollution-new-developments/air-pollution-exposure-during-pregnancy-and-reproductive-outcomes>

³ de Prado Bert, P., Mercader, E.M.H., Pujol, J. et al. The Effects of Air Pollution on the Brain: a Review of Studies Interfacing Environmental Epidemiology and Neuroimaging. *Curr Envir Health Rpt* 5, 351–364 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40572-018-0209-9>

⁴ Jedrychowski, W.A., Perera, F.P., Camann, D. et al. Prenatal exposure to polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and cognitive dysfunction in children. *Environ Sci Pollut Res* 22, 3631–3639 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-014-3627-8>