



Environmental Health Fact Sheet

Motor Vehicle Idling and Health

February 2013

The Community Outreach and Engagement Core (COEC) increases awareness and understanding of environmental health research.

Stakeholder Advisory Board members include:

- Community Health and Social Services Center, Inc.
- Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation
- Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice
- Institute for Population Health
- Green Door Initiative
- Henry Ford Health System
- Eastside Community Network
- Michigan Department of Community Health
- University of Michigan School of Public Health

Why is Idling Harmful?

Vehicle idling is common. Drivers may let their engines run while they warm up their cars or while they wait for people who they are picking up. This is particularly common outside of schools, where people are picking up children.

The pollution released by idling vehicles is harmful to the environment and to the health of individuals. Just one vehicle dropping off and picking up children at school releases three pounds of air pollution each month.¹ Children are particularly vulnerable to this air pollution because:

- Their lungs are still developing.
- They breathe faster than adults. On average, children breathe 50% more air per pound of body weight than adults do.
- Due to their height, they are closer to the ground and therefore closer to vehicle tailpipes.²

There are many health problems associated with air pollution for both children and adults, including asthma, cardiovascular disease and cancer.³

What Are Some Myths About Idling?

Many people think that idling is better for their car and better for their wallet. The truth is that:

- The best way to warm up your vehicle is to drive it slowly. Even when it is cold outside, you do not need to run your engine for more than 30 seconds before driving.
- Idling can cause damage to your engine, including the cylinders, spark plugs and exhaust systems.
- Ten seconds of idling uses more gas than restarting the engine. You could save fuel and money by turning the car off.⁴



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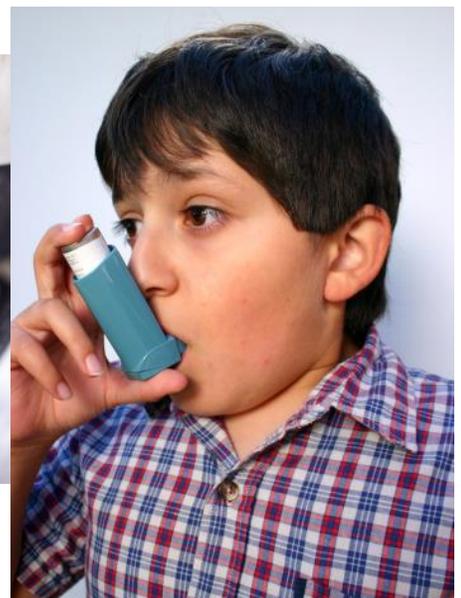
DO YOU LET YOUR ENGINE IDLE?

By turning off your vehicle's engine, you can:

- Improve the health of children in your community
- Protect the environment
- Save gas and money
- Reduce wear and tear on your vehicle

Together, we can make a difference!

(For more information, please turn to the other side.)



The University of Michigan Environmental Health Science Core Center promotes collaboration among UM environmental health researchers and communities. Researchers work together to advance knowledge of environmental health issues that affect community members in Detroit and Southeast Michigan.

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