During the summer, we spend more time outdoors, travel or work in the garden. But, for those with lung diseases, pollen, smog and the weather can dampen those fun summer-time activities by causing breathing problems.

Having a lung disease like asthma, COPD, or allergies can lead to sneezing, wheezing and itchy misery. These conditions can be worsened by or be particularly affected by pollen, bad air quality, and weather. It’s especially difficult on days that are smoggy and humid and have high pollen counts.

In the summer, some asthma triggers are more noticeable:

- Smog
- Pollen from grass, trees, and ragweed
- Thunderstorms
- Wood smoke

Smog can cause many symptoms:

- Throat irritation
- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness
- Worsening of asthma and COPD symptoms

These symptoms are more noticeable on a smoggy day or may show up days or hours later. In order to protect your breathing on days with bad air quality, make sure to stay inside in clean air-conditioned rooms or buildings. If you must spend time outside on smoggy days, follow these suggestions:

- Take allergy medication before walking out the door
- Wear big, wraparound sunglasses to keep pollen from getting into your eyes
- Do not exercise or exert yourself
- Stay in the shade, away from roads with heavy traffic
- Drink plenty of water
- Pay attention to your body; if you’re having asthma symptoms, use your inhaler immediately

Source: The Lung Association and American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology
Your respiratory system is made up of your nose, sinuses, mouth, throat, voice box, windpipe, lungs, diaphragm, and blood vessels. Breathing is the simple process of inhaling and exhaling. You breathe about 25,000 times a day during a normal day. If you’re relatively healthy, this is a simple task, but for millions with chronic, or long term respiratory disease, breathing is not always so feasible.

Since respiratory disease affects your lungs, symptoms are related to how well you can breathe. Granted, in the early stages of respiratory disease, you may just feel tired. However, other symptoms may include:

- Feeling short of breath during physical activity
- Feeling as though you cannot get enough air
- A cough that won’t go away
- Coughing up blood or mucous
- Uncomfortable or painful breathing
- A feeling of tightness in the chest
- Wheezing or a squeaky sound when you breathe

Breathing is essential for life, as it delivers necessary oxygen into the body for healthy and proper cell function. Here are some tips for breathing in certain situations throughout the day:

- **While You Work** – Holding your breath at work due to stressed situations elevates blood pressure, and over time can lead to greater risk factors (i.e. heart attack). When feeling stressed at the workplace, take a few minutes out of your lunch to practice calm breathing techniques and tune out distracting noises.

- **While You Sleep** – Studies show that lack of sleep, whether it’s related to a serious condition like sleep apnea or staying up late to watch your favorite show, can cause hypertension. Be aware of signs of sleep apnea, such as: snoring and/or loud gasping for breath while you sleep, and if you experience this for yourself or a loved one, consult with a doctor on a solution.

- **While You Exercise** – Performing proper breathing techniques during exercise will prevent cramping and other issues resulting in insufficient oxygen to the blood, and in turn, allow you to have more effective workouts.

- **While You Clean** – Chemicals in the air you breathe during house cleaning can cause respiratory issues such as asthma. Try switching your household cleaners to nontoxic items, such as: vinegar, lemon juice, and toothpaste.

- **While You Clean** – When staying at a hotel or areas where individuals can smoke, stay in the non-smoking rooms as third-hand smoke (e.g. carcinogens left in a carpet or clinging to a bedspread in a smoking room) is an often overlooked health hazard.

*Source: American Lung Association*
Watermelons are a classic summer road stand fruit that sometimes goes to waste because they are so large. Make use of your leftover watermelon slices and cool down from the heat with this fresh, tangy summer sipper.

**Preparation**

1. Place watermelon cubes in a single layer in an extra-large zip-top plastic freezer bag, and freeze 8 hours. Let stand at room temperature 15 minutes.

2. Process half each of watermelon, ginger ale, water, and limeade concentrate in a blender until smooth; pour mixture into a pitcher. Repeat procedure with remaining half of ingredients; stir into pitcher, and serve immediately.

**Ingredients**

- 8 cups (1/2-inch) watermelon cubes
- 1 ½ cups ginger ale
- 1/3 cup water
- 1 (6-oz) can frozen limeade concentrate

**Honeydew Cooler**

Substitute 8 cups (1/2-inch) honeydew melon cubes for watermelon cubes and 1 (6-oz) can frozen lemonade concentrate for limeade concentrate; proceed as directed.

**Cantaloupe Cooler**

Substitute 8 cups (1/2-inch) cantaloupe cubes for watermelon, and add 2 tsp. grated fresh ginger to mixture in blender. Proceed as directed.

**Nutritional Information**

- Calories: 117
- Fat: 0.3 g
- Protein: 1.4 g
- Carbohydrate: 29 g
- Fiber: 0.1 g
- Sodium: 32 mg
- Calcium: 19 mg

Source: Southernliving.com