

# How to avoid air pollution when you're pregnant



## Work from home

If your job can be done remotely, working from home occasionally can reduce the number of times that you have to travel during high pollution periods, such as rush hours and particularly high pollution days.

When you are working from home, try to keep your house well ventilated, and avoid burning candles or woodfires, as these contribute to air pollution too.

## Work flexible hours

When you need to travel to work, see whether it is possible for you to work hours that allow you to avoid the worst of the rush hour.

Can you start and leave a bit earlier or later so that you still complete the same number of hours, but miss the traffic?

## Ask your friends to visit you

Particularly on days when the air pollution levels are high, try asking your friends to come to you, rather than you going to them.

## Get your shopping delivered

You may be able to avoid journeys in polluted areas by arranging for your shopping to be delivered to you. Lots of supermarkets now offer home deliveries and often they will let you know if they are already delivering to someone in your area, so you're not increasing the number of vans coming down your road.

## Use quieter routes

When you are travelling, try to take routes that avoid the main roads. Pick side streets or paths that take you through parks (where there are also often benches so you can sit and enjoy the quiet for a moment!). Pollution levels are usually highest around main roads, and getting just a small distance away from these can help to reduce how much pollution is around you.

## Avoid cars

Cars can have pollution levels inside them that are twice that outside. If you do need to use a car, try to travel at times that mean you will avoid getting stuck in traffic. If you are in traffic, switch the air conditioning to "recirculate" to avoid drawing in the pollution from the car in front of you.

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# How to ask your employer about working from home



**Dear Boss,**

Air pollution can affect people in lots of ways: it's linked with respiratory and cardiac conditions, increased risk of cancer and evidence is even starting to show a link to dementia.

But even before my child is born, air pollution can already be affecting them.

There is a link between being exposed to high levels of air pollution and low birth weight in babies, it can lead to premature birth or pregnancy loss and exposure to air pollution during pregnancy can also affect the lung function development of babies.

Traffic is one of the biggest sources of air pollution, and pollution levels around roads can be especially high around typical commuter travel times. One of the recommendations during pregnancy is to avoid these high levels of pollution by working from home more often.

Because of this, I would like to work from home more regularly, especially on those days when there are predicted high levels of air pollution and where my work tasks do not require me to be in the office. This should not have any negative impacts on my ability to carry out my job: in a project carried out by the charity Global Aciton Plan, 96% of workers from a major communications firm found that they were equally or more productive when working from home rather than in the office, making this a win/win solution.

If you would like to understand more about the health impacts of air pollution, and what you can do to avoid it, you can find out more information at [cleanairday.org.uk](http://cleanairday.org.uk).

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By shifting my working pattern by one or two hours [forwards or backwards] I can still carry out the same amount of work, while reducing the amount of pollution that I and my unborn baby are exposed to.

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