

<https://www.nvcliniciansforclimate.org/noidling>

Nevada Clinicians for Climate Action's mission is to educate people living in Nevada about the harmful effects of greenhouse emissions and climate change through advocacy, all while preparing for or mitigating the expected adverse consequences. The organization has an ongoing project called No Idling in Schools, where its main concern is the secondhand health effects vehicle idling has on children. Every day, there are countless parents and guardians who idle their vehicles outside schools and child care centers without realizing that even a few minutes can have measurable effects on children's respiratory health. A vehicle idling can release a mix of pollutants, including nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and volatile organic compounds (EPA, 2022). These emissions are hazardous and can greatly affect the lungs of children whose organs and immune systems are still developing.

Additionally, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA, 2022), children breathe in about 50 percent more air relative to their body size than adults because of their breathing rates and are more physically active. Moreover, children who breathe in these gas emissions have a higher risk of childhood asthma, chronic bronchitis, reduced lung function, and stunted lung development (Burgess et al., 2009). Children exposed to these chemical pollutants also have a higher risk of childhood leukemia and lower IQ levels. Furthermore, Burgess (2009) showed that higher levels of traffic pollution predicted decreased cognitive function for children on verbal and non-verbal intelligence tests, and it persisted after correcting for demographic factors, birth weight, blood level, and tobacco smoke exposure. Nevertheless, many underestimate the risks of idling and its triggers to respiratory symptoms and cancer risks.

Alternatively, there are ways that family physicians can help reduce children's exposure to idling toxins while at school. For instance, during medical visits, physicians can educate and encourage a change in their habits of idling, especially at school. Another form of intervention is by supporting and participating in community-led anti-idling campaigns. There are resources already for the public that family physicians can look into, such as the EPA's Idle-Free Schools Toolkit and the U.S. Department of Energy's

Clean Cities program. Nevada Clinicians for Climate Action is also working to promote and educate the harmful effects of idling through the use of campaigns and outreach materials. All in all, healthy air equates to a healthy environment for a healthy child. If you are concerned about climate and environmental health, you can join Nevada Clinicians for Climate Action and become an ally for a healthy climate for all those living in Nevada. Link: <https://www.nvcliniciansforclimate.org/>

Sources

Burgess, E., Peffers, M., Silverman, I., & Environmental Defense Fund. (2009). *IDLING GETS YOU NOWHERE: THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF ENGINE IDLING IN NEW YORK CITY* (By Hinkle Charitable Foundation, The New York Community Trust, Rahul Shah, Carlos Jaramillo, George Pakenham, Logan Welde, & M.J. Bradley & Associates LLC, Inc.).

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United States Environmental Protection Agency. (2022). *Environmental health threats to children*.

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