



Motor Vehicle Idling and 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 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 people.¹ Just one vehicle dropping off and picking up children at school releases three pounds of air pollution each month.² Children are particularly vulnerable to this air pollution because:

- Their lungs are still developing
- They breathe faster than adults.^{3 4}
- Due to their height, they are closer to the ground and therefore closer to vehicle tailpipes.



There are many health problems associated with air pollution for both children and adults, including asthma, cardiovascular disease and cancer.⁵

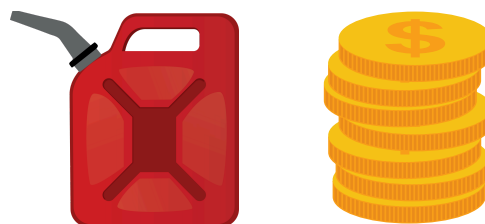
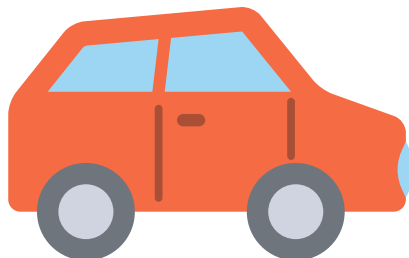




How does idling impact me directly?

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. ^{6 7}
- Idling can cause damage to your engine. ⁸
- Ten seconds of idling uses more gas than restarting the engine. You could save fuel and money by turning the car off. ^{6 7}



What does this mean for me and my community?



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

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

Together, we can make a difference!

Please see http://mleead.umich.edu/Coec_Fact_Sheets.php for the citations included in this factsheet. This research was supported by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) (#R01ES022616, #R01ES032389) and the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, with additional support provided by the Michigan Center on Lifestage Environmental Exposures and Disease (M-LEEaD) (NIEHS #P30ES017885).