

News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Thursday, April 11, 2013

Sublette County Ozone Health Study Results Available

Results of a Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) study of possible health effects linked with higher amounts of ground-level ozone in Sublette County are now available.

For the study, WDH compared health records from two local health clinics with ground-level daily ozone concentrations, temperature and humidity data collected by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The study suggests that for every 10 parts per billion increase in the eight-hour maximum ground-level ozone there was a 3 percent increase in local health clinic visits due to respiratory-related complaints the following day.

“Ground-level ozone is formed through a reaction between sunlight and pollutants from natural or man-made sources,” said Dr. Kerry Pride, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention epidemiologist and veterinarian assigned to the Wyoming Department of Health. “Ozone amounts vary day to day and from place to place depending on the weather and pollution amounts and types.”

Pride said exposure to ground-level ozone can make it more difficult for some people to breathe deeply and vigorously; cause coughing and sore or scratchy throats; inflame and damage airways, which leads to increased susceptibility to infections; and aggravate lung diseases such as asthma, emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

The DEQ data, which was collected from 2008-11, showed ground-level ozone concentrations in Sublette County followed seasonal patterns with highest concentrations between February and April and lower concentrations between October and December.

“Our findings for Sublette County were very similar to what other studies across the country and internationally have found,” Pride said.

The full report is available online at www.health.wyo.gov.

DEQ has planned a post winter ozone season open house meeting for Thursday, April 18 from 6-8 p.m. at the Sublette BOCES Building, located on North Tyler in Pinedale. A WDH representative will be available during the open house to answer questions about the health effects study.

#####