WHO Social media toolkit for *Air pollution and Child Health: Prescribing Clean Air* Launch

29 October 2018
Geneva, Switzerland

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**Air Pollution and Child Health: Prescribing Clean Air**

The report *Air Pollution and Child Health: Prescribing Clean Air* summarizes the latest scientific knowledge on the links between exposure to air pollution and adverse health effects in children. It is intended to inform and motivate individual and collective action by health care professionals to prevent damage to children’s health from exposure to air pollution.

Although more rigorous research into how air pollution affects children’s health will continue to be valuable, this report and similar ones before it provide ample evidence to justify strong, swift action to prevent the damage it clearly produces. Health professionals, policy makers, members of civil society and the general public must come together to address this threat as a priority, through collective, coordinated efforts. For the millions of children exposed to polluted air every day, there is little time to waste and so much to be gained.

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**Social media toolkit for the release of the WHO report “Air Pollution and Child Health: Prescribing Clean Air:”**

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1. Introduction To Social Media Resources

This toolkit provides a set of sample social media messages, which stakeholders and supporters of the WHO report, *Air Pollution and Child Health: Prescribing Clean Air*, may wish to use in their personal and institutional accounts to distribute and amplify the key messages.

**Hashtags:** #BreatheLife #AirPollution

**Handles:**
Key Institutions: @WHO @UNEP @CCACoalition @WHO_Europe, @WHOSEARO, @pahowho, @WHOWPRO, @WHOAFRO, @WHOEMRO @WMO

WHO representatives: @DrTedros, @DrMariaNeira

2. Children’s Exposure To Air Pollution

**Key Messages**

- Exposure to air pollution is an overlooked health emergency for children around the world.
- Exposure is a persistent problem in some high-income countries (HICs) – especially in low-income communities within those countries – the vast majority of child deaths from exposure to particulate matter air pollution occur in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).
- The proportions of children exposed to levels of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) higher than the WHO air quality guidelines are as follows:
  - 93% of all children < 18 years of age and about 630 million children under 5 years in the world; in LMICs, 98% of all children under 5 years; in HICs, 52% of children under 5 years; in the WHO African and Eastern Mediterranean regions, 100% of all children under 5 years; in LMICs in the South-East Asia Region, 99% of all children under 5 years; in LMICs in the Western Pacific Region, 98% of all children under 5 years; and in LMICs in the Americas Region, 87% of all children under 5 years.
- Outdoor air pollution was responsible for 4.2 million premature deaths in 2016; of these, almost 300 000 were children under 5 years old.
- Household air pollution was responsible for 3.8 million premature deaths in 2016, including over 400 000 deaths of children under 5 years of age.
- About three billion people worldwide still depend on polluting fuels and devices for cooking and heating

**Tweets**

1. @WHO’s new report on #AirPollution and child health finds that almost 630 million children under 5 are exposed to air pollution levels that do not meet WHO limits #BreatheLife  http://www.who.int/

Click [here](http://www.who.int/) to access the infographic
2. @DrTedros launches new @WHO report that finds 93% of children around the world are exposed to air pollution levels that do not meet WHO limits #AirPollution http://www.who.int/

Click [here](http://www.who.int/) to access the infographic

3. @WHO Exposure to #AirPollution is an overlooked health emergency for children around the world. It’s time everyone takes notice #BreatheLife http://www.who.int/

Click [here](http://www.who.int/) to access the infographic
4. @WHO In low- and middle-income countries, 98% of all children under 5 years are exposed to dirty air. In high-income countries, 52% of children under 5 breathe polluted air #AirPollution http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic

5. @WHO In the African and Eastern Mediterranean regions, 100% of all children under 5 years breathe dirty air. We can change this together. #BreatheLife http://www.who.int/

6. @WHO In South-East Asia, 99% of all children under 5 years breathe dirty air on a daily basis. Together, we can tackle this public health emergency. #BreatheLife http://www.who.int/

7. @WHO In low and middle-income countries in the Western Pacific, 98% of all children under 5 years breathe dirty air. Together, we can change this. #BreatheLife http://www.who.int/

8. @WHO In low and middle-income countries in the Americas, 87% of all children under 5 years breathe dirty air. We can change this together. #BreatheLife #AirPollution http://www.who.int/
9. Outdoor air pollution was responsible for 4.2 million premature deaths in 2016. Of these, around 300,000 were children under 5 years old. The time to act on #AirPollution is now #BreatheLife http://www.who.int/

10. Household air pollution was responsible for 3.8 million premature deaths in 2016, including over 400,000 deaths of children under 5 years of age. This is a public health crisis #AirPollution #BreatheLife http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic

11. @WHO About three billion people worldwide still depend on polluting fuels and devices for cooking and heating, leading to a lifetime of breathing dirty air. #AirPollution http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic

12. Dirty air doesn’t just affect kids’ lungs. During early childhood, air pollution puts all developing organs like the brain and heart at risk. Learn about this public health crisis threatening kids #AirPollution http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic
3. Effects Of Air Pollution On Children’s Health And Children’s Unique Exposure Risk

Key Messages

- Exposure to pollutants in the air threatens the health of people of all ages, but it affects the most vulnerable among us – children – in unique ways.
- Children are especially vulnerable during fetal development and in their earliest years, while their lungs, organs and brains are still maturing.
- In the womb, they are vulnerable to their mothers’ exposure to pollutants.
- The consequences of their exposure – through inhalation, ingestion or in utero – can lead to illness and other health burdens that last a lifetime.
- Globally in 2016, one in every eight deaths was attributable to breathing dirty air – a total of 7 million deaths. Some 543 000 deaths in children under 5 years and 52 000 deaths in children aged 5–15 years were attributed to the joint effects of outdoor and household air pollution in 2016.
- Together, outdoor and household air pollution cause more than 50% of acute lower respiratory infections (ALRI) in children under 5 years of age in low and middle-income countries.
- Exposure to air pollution contributes to more than half of all deaths from ALRI in children under 5 years in LMICs, making it one of the leading killers of children worldwide.
- Of the total number of deaths attributable to the joint effects of outdoor and household pollution worldwide in 2016, 9% were in children.
- The five leading causes of death in children under 5 globally are prematurity, acute respiratory infections, intrapartum-related complications (including birth asphyxia), other group 1 conditions and congenital anomalies (9).
- Premature birth is the only factor that kills more children under 5 globally than acute respiratory infections. In the African Region, acute respiratory infection is the leading cause of death of children under 5.

Tweets
1. @WHO: Exposure to pollutants in the air threatens the health of people of all ages, but it affects the most vulnerable among us – children – in unique ways #AirPollution #BreatheLife http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic

2. @WHO Children depend entirely on us to protect them from the threat of unsafe air. Are we doing enough? Learn more about the impact of dirty air on little lungs #AirPollution http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic

3. #AirPollution led to 543,000 deaths in children under 5 years and 52,000 deaths in children aged 5–15 years in 2016. As health professionals, we can and must do better #BreatheLife http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic
4. @WHO: Breathing dirty air caused the deaths of almost 600,000 children in 2016. As health professionals, we can and must do better #BreatheLife http://www.who.int/

5. @WHO: Children are uniquely vulnerable to the damaging health effects of air pollution. See how at http://www.who.int/ #AirPollution http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic

6. @WHO new report finds that of the total number of deaths attributable to the air pollution worldwide in 2016 - 9% of these were in children. See what health professional can do to combat dirty air #BreatheLife http://www.who.int/

7. @WHO: Breathing dirty air can be a life sentence to illness #AirPollution #BreatheLife http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic

8. @WHO The evidence is clear: air pollution has a devastating impact on children's health #AirPollution http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic
9. Polluted air affects children more than adults, especially during vulnerable years while their lungs, organs and brains are still maturing. Learn more about #AirPollution  http://www.who.int/

Click [here](http://www.who.int/) to access the infographic.

To access WHO Air Pollution Infographics in English click [here](http://www.who.int/) and in French click [here](http://www.who.int/).

### 4. Sources Of Air Pollution – Key Messages & Tweets

**Key Messages**

**Ambient Air Pollution (AAP)**

- AAP caused about 4.2 million premature deaths in 2016. It is estimated that, in 2016, 286,000 children under 15 years of age died from exposure to AAP.
- Ambient air is polluted from many sources, both anthropogenic and natural, which differ in urban and rural areas. In urban settings, the main sources are fossil fuel combustion for energy production, transport, residential cooking, heating and waste incineration.
- Many proven solutions are available to reduce emissions of dangerous pollutants in cities, including cleaner transport, cleaner cooking and heating fuels and technologies, energy-efficient housing and urban planning, low- or...
zero-emission power generation, cleaner, safer industrial technologies and better municipal waste management

Household Air Pollution (HAP)
- HAP – the single largest environmental health risk factor worldwide – is produced mainly by incomplete combustion of polluting fuels for cooking, heating and lighting.
- In 2016, WHO estimated that about three billion people – 41% of the world’s population – used polluting fuels mainly for cooking, most of them in low- and middle-income countries. This number has remained largely unchanged for the past three decades.
- In 2016, HAP from solid fuel use resulted in an estimated 3.8 million premature deaths. This toll is equivalent to 6.7% of global mortality, greater than that from malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS combined. Of these deaths, 403,000 were among children under 5 years of age.
- HAP is also an important source of AAP, as residential cooking contributes as much as 12% of global PM2.5 to ambient air.

Social determinants of air pollution
- Poverty is strongly correlated with exposure to air pollution. Children in LMICs and in low-income communities within HICs disproportionately suffer the effects of air pollution.

Tweets

1. Outdoor air pollution caused around 4.2 million premature deaths in 2016. Of these, 286,000 were among children under 15 years of age #BreatheLife #BeatAirPollution http://www.who.int/

2. Household air pollution is the single largest environmental health risk factor worldwide and is produced mainly by incomplete combustion of polluting fuels for cooking, heating and lighting. We need safer homes for all our children #BreatheLife #AirPollution http://www.who.int/

3. In 2016, WHO estimated that about three billion people – 41% of the world’s population – used polluting fuels mainly for cooking, most of them in low and middle-income countries. #BreatheLife #AirPollution http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic
4. In 2016, household air pollution from solid fuel use resulted in an estimated 3.8 million premature deaths. Of these deaths, 403 000 were among children under 5 years of age #BreatheLife #AirPollution  http://www.who.int/

Click [here](http://www.who.int/) to access the infographic

5. Poverty is strongly correlated with exposure to air pollution and children in low and middle-income countries and in low-income communities within high income countries disproportionately suffer the effects. #BreatheLife #AirPollution http://www.who.int/

possible tags: @WHO, @WHOWPRO, @UNFCCC, @DrTedros, @DrMariaNeira

5. Recommended Actions For Health Professionals

Key Messages

- Health professionals are trusted sources of information and guidance. As such, they play a strong role in perception in and action on the issue through their communication with local communities/community leaders.
- They play an important role not only in treating ill health caused by air pollution but also in educating families and patients about risks and solutions and communicating with the broader public and decision-makers.
- They must increase their role in the management of childhood exposure to air pollution through improved methods of care and prevention and collective action.
- Health professionals can provide evidence to shape public health policy and advocate for effective policies to reduce children’s exposure to air pollution.
- The broader health sector must become more engaged in preparing a comprehensive approach to addressing this crisis.

Tweets

1. @WHO Informed action by health professionals can help reduce the exposure of children to air pollution and save lives. See how at [http://www.who.int/](http://www.who.int/) #AirPollution

Click [here](http://www.who.int/) to access the infographic
2. Everyone has a role to play, at every level in cleaning up dirty air for children across the world [http://www.who.int/](http://www.who.int/) #AirPollution

Click [here](http://www.who.int/) to access the infographic.

3. Health professionals must come together to address this threat as an emergency, through collective, coordinated efforts. #AirPollution [http://www.who.int/](http://www.who.int/)

Click [here](http://www.who.int/) to access the infographic.
4. For the millions of children exposed to polluted air every day, there is little
time to waste #AirPollution http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic

5. Health care professionals have a key role to play in #AirPollution by talking to
communities about how pollution affects kids. http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic
6. Air pollution is a life-threatening health risk for kids. Health professionals should be informed, concerned, and active about how dirty air affects kids’ health. Read more about #AirPollution at http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic

7. Working in health care should mean learning about all the things that put kids’ health at risk - like breathing dirty air. Learn about the value of prescribing clean air #AirPollution http://www.who.int/

Click here to access the infographic

6. Breathelife Campaign - Health & Climate Co-benefits Of Reducing Air Pollution

Key Messages

- Health & climate leaders must lead on combating the threat of air pollution, a driver of climate change and killer of nearly 600,000 children annually.
Mayors and urban leaders are invited to join cities like #London, #Santiago, #Washington DC in the www.breathelife2030.org campaign to protect children by reducing air pollution to WHO air quality levels.

WHO, UN Environment & the Climate and Clean Air Coalition invite you to join the #BreatheLife campaign to stop air pollution deaths and protect our cities’ children www.breathelife2030.org

Breathelife2030.org is mobilizing health and climate sectors to work together to protect children by tackling air pollution and climate pollutants.

Interventions that reduce carbon emissions are likely to result in benefits for both children’s health and the climate.

Tweets

Note: All MULTILINGUAL BreatheLife infographics can be found in all six UN languages at this link

Hashtags and handles:
@WHO, @WHO_Europe, @COP23, @DrTedros, @DrMariaNeira, @CCAC #BreatheLife #AirPollution

1. @WHO @DrTedros calls on Mayors and urban leaders to join cities like #London, #Santiago, #Washington DC in the www.breathelife2030.org campaign to protect children’s lives and reduce air pollution to WHO air quality levels. #AirPollution

Click here to access the infographic

2. @WHO @DrMariaNeira calls on Mayors and urban leaders to join cities like #London, #Santiago, #Washington DC in the www.breathelife2030.org to protect the health of children and reduce air pollution to WHO air quality levels #AirPollution

Click here to access the infographic
3. 9 out of 10 kids worldwide breathe polluted air. Join @WHO in the Breathinglife2030.org campaign to help #BreatheLife back into our children’s cities #AirPollution

Click [here](#) to access the infographic

4. 9 out of 10 children breathe unsafe air. Protect kids by reducing air pollution to safe levels. Ask your city to act: bit.ly/BLActNow1 #AirPollution

Click [here](#) to access the infographic

5. Let your leaders know that reducing #airpollution saves children’s lives and can help get us on track to meet the #ParisAgreement by 2030: bit.ly/BLActNow1 #BreatheLife
6. Air pollution is the invisible killer causing nearly 600,000 deaths in children each year. Help #BeatAirPollution at BreatheLife2030.org

Click here to access the infographic

7. 9 out of 10 children live in areas that fail to meet WHO air quality guidelines. Join the www.breathelife2030.org campaign to improve urban air quality for children everywhere #AirPollution

Click here to access the infographic