

- Respiration (breathing)

Breathe easy: Tips to keep your lungs in top shape amid rising pollution

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LUNG health is increasingly critical as air pollution continues to affect Filipinos, with experts from the Manila Observatory noting that at least 100 out of every 100,000 Filipinos die annually from air pollution-related causes.

With this in mind, Makati Medical Center (MakatiMed) has shared practical tips to help individuals protect their lungs from harmful environmental factors.

Dr. Gregorio P. Ocampo, a pulmonary medicine expert at MakatiMed, emphasizes the role of pollutants, such as vehicular emissions and industrial pollution, in respiratory diseases. “These pollutants increase the risk of respiratory infections and chronic diseases like pneumonia, bronchitis, COPD, and lung cancer,” Dr. Ocampo said.

While we cannot control outdoor pollution, MakatiMed offers solutions for improving lung health indoors. “Eliminate indoor smoking, use HEPA air purifiers, and clean air filters regularly. Pet grooming and air-purifying plants like snake plants also help,” Dr. Ocampo recommended.

Maintaining a healthy diet is also essential. Dr. Ocampo advises avoiding processed and fried foods, which can strain the lungs. Instead, he recommends consuming antioxidant-rich foods like apples, tomatoes, beets, and leafy greens to support lung function.

Exercise plays a key role in lung health as well. Aerobic activities like running and swimming enhance oxygen intake, while practices such as yoga and Pilates promote proper breathing and posture, helping individuals make full use of their lung capacity.

“Even simple deep breathing exercises can help engage the diaphragm and improve overall respiratory wellness,” Dr. Ocampo added.

Additionally, staying up to date on flu and pneumonia vaccinations is crucial for respiratory protection, particularly for individuals at higher risk, such as smokers or those exposed to secondhand smoke. MakatiMed advises regular X-rays and spirometry tests for early detection and treatment of lung conditions.

“Every breath you take matters,” Dr. Ocampo concluded, urging Filipinos to prioritize lung health in their daily lives.