

British air pollution: still unacceptable

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A British study issued Wednesday says air pollution from cars, factories and homes shortens the lives of everyone in Britain by approximately eight months.

Government officials told *The Independent* air in Britain is cleaner than at any time since the 19th century, but they expect to miss targets to reduce the levels of nitrogen dioxide, ozone and particulates.

Nitrogen dioxide and particulates, mainly produced by traffic, irritate the airways of the lungs and can exacerbate lung diseases. Ozone at ground level is produced when pollution reacts with sunlight, the newspaper said.

The British Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs says a plan to reduce harmful emissions by 2020 could increase average life expectancy by three months.

Environmental Minister Ben Bradshaw told *The Independent*: "Pollutants from our cars, ships and industrial plants are still having a marked effect on our health. This can't continue."

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