


Ozone can be "good" or "bad"

Ozone occurs naturally in two layers of the atmosphere.



"Good" ozone occurs naturally in the second layer of the atmosphere, the stratosphere, extending 10 to 30 miles above Earth. It helps block some of the sun's ultraviolet rays.

Manmade chemicals have been depleting that layer. The result: Higher levels of ultraviolet rays reach us, which can lead to skin cancer and crop depletion. The depletion is suspected of causing a decline in phytoplankton, a plant that is an important link in the marine food chain.

Closer to the Earth's surface, ozone is created by a chemical reaction in which oxides of nitrogen and volatile organic compounds meet in the presence of sunlight.

Too much ozone is constantly forming within 10 miles of Earth's surface. It is created when sunlight and heat cook a combination of air pollutants, such as car exhausts, chemical solvents and industrial emissions. "Bad" ozone is a key ingredient of smog.



Source: Environmental Protection Agency