**Health Effects of O3:**

**Ground-level Ozone**

Ground-level ozone is formed when volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and oxides of nitrogen (NOx) react with the sun's ultraviolet rays. The primary source of VOCs and NOx is mobile sources, including cars, trucks, buses, construction equipment and agricultural equipment.

Ground-level ozone reaches its highest level during the afternoon and early evening hours. High levels occur most often during the summer months. It is a strong irritant that can cause constriction of the airways, forcing the respiratory system to work harder in order to provide oxygen.

It can also cause other health problems including:

* Aggravated respiratory disease such as emphysema, bronchitis and asthma
* Lung damage, even after symptoms such as coughing or a sore throat disappear
* Wheezing, chest pain, dry throat, headache or nausea
* Reduced resistance to infections
* Increased fatigue

Weakened athletic performance