

## 'New car diet' hailed to save gas, environment

By [Bill Novak](#) — 5/15/2007 11:56 am

Trying to lose a few pounds of air pollution? Then sign up for the Car-Lite Diet.

The gas-saving and pollution-reducing diet was introduced today by the Dane County Clean Air Coalition at a press conference at the UW Health Clinic in Research Park.

The Car-Lite Diet is centered around a 14-day car trip reduction plan. Drivers are encouraged to sign up [online](#) to keep track of how many miles they drive around town and to see where trips can be combined, reduced or eliminated.

The plan also includes tips on car or van pooling, using the Metro bus system, and biking to work to save gas, money and the environment.

The kickoff for the Car-Lite Diet coincides with Asthma Awareness Month, since bad air can seriously affect asthma sufferers.

"During periods of elevated ozone and particle pollution, adults and children with asthma are more likely to experience symptoms," said Dr. Henry Anderson, chief medical officer at the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services. "Recent health statistics estimate that 40,000 Dane County residents suffer from asthma."

Area businesses and government agencies are being encouraged to sign up for the Car-Lite Diet, with three already taking part, including UW Hospital and Clinics, Madison Gas and Electric and the business tenants in the Network222 building downtown.

"We encourage all of our employees and all Dane County residents to make a difference in the fight to keep our air healthy by driving less," said UW Hospitals and Clinic spokesman Tim Le Mond. "Not only will we be saving money due to soaring gas prices but we'll protect our health and quality of life."

Madison's air meets state and federal quality standards, but there have been several days over the past two summers when "clean air action days" have been enacted due to ozone and particulate levels spiking.

"The Car-Lite Diet is a great way for businesses to impact our air quality and promote employee initiatives to reduce air pollution," said Jennifer Alexander, president of the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce. "Healthy air means a healthier economy, which is a win-win for Dane County residents."

For more information on clean air action days and the Clean Air Coalition's healthy air initiative, go to the coalition [web site](#).