

Protection from Wildfire Smoke

Smoke from wildfires and structure fires contains significant quantities of irritating chemicals. Residents may experience symptoms during and after being exposed to wildfire smoke, including eye irritation, throat irritation and coughing. Some people with existing heart and lung disease, including asthma, may experience heightened symptoms. The elderly and children are also more likely to be affected by health threats from smoke. Even healthy people may experience some of these symptoms in smoky conditions. Seek medical help if you experience symptoms that worsen or become severe.

Recommendations for Minimizing Smoke Exposure

- ✓ Stay indoors with windows and doors closed; run air-conditioner on “recirculate” setting. Do not run swamp coolers.
- ✓ Minimize or stop outdoor activities, especially exercise, during smoky conditions.
- ✓ People in a “high risk” group or those who cannot find adequate shelter from the smoke outside may need to move temporarily to a place away from the smoke.
- ✓ Masks that filter out 95% of particles measuring 0.3 micrometers diameter or larger (called “N95” or “R95” masks) can be of some benefit if properly fitted to the wearer’s face. These can be found at large hardware and home stores. HEPA filter masks are recommended.
- ✓ When driving in smoky conditions, make sure to drive with the windows rolled up and the air conditioner on “recirculate.”
- ✓ Drive carefully in smoky conditions with poor visibility.

With these fire and wind conditions, it’s especially important for people with asthma or other respiratory diseases or heart conditions to monitor their health and consult with their health care providers if their symptoms worsen. Take prescribed respiratory and heart medications and keep at least a five-day supply of all medications. Be sure to take your medications with you if you are evacuated. Individuals with respiratory illness should consider leaving the area until air quality conditions improve. [Stay tuned for emergency announcements on radio and TV about air quality.](#)

For more information, please contact:
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