

WILDFIRE SMOKE PRECAUTIONS

Environment Canada has issued air quality advisories due to smoke impacts from surrounding wildfires for several areas.

Impact: Exposure to particle pollution can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, cause asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections.

Instructions: Use caution as conditions warrant. People with heart or lung diseases should follow their doctor's advice for dealing with episodes of unhealthy air quality. Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure, strenuous activities, or heavy exertion, as conditions dictate.

Air Quality Health Index (AQHI)

Health Risk	AQHI Index	Health Messages	
		At Risk Population ¹	General Population
Low	1 - 3	Enjoy your usual outdoor activities.	Ideal air quality for outdoor activities.
Moderate (MOD)	4 - 6	Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you are experiencing symptoms.	No need to modify your usual outdoor activities unless you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.
High	7 - 10	Reduce or reschedule strenuous activities outdoors. Children and the elderly should also take it easy.	Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.
Very High	Above 10	Avoid strenuous activities outdoors. Children and the elderly should also avoid outdoor physical exertion.	Reduce or reschedule strenuous activities outdoors, especially if you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.

¹ People with heart or breathing problems are at greater risk. Follow your doctor's usual advice about exercising and managing your condition.

Source: Environment Canada

* If the AQHI index has increased to 7 (high health risk), it is usually because of high concentrations of smoke particles (PM2.5) in this community.

For additional information visit our [Wildfire Resource Centre](#) or contact [HUB's Crisis Management team](#).



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Wildfire Smoke Precautions

If possible, limit your exposure to smoke. Here are eight tips to help protect your health from breathing wildfire smoke:

1. Pay attention to local air quality reports and the Government of Canada [Air Quality Health Index](#). When a wildfire occurs in your area, watch for news or health warnings about smoke. Pay attention to public health messages and take extra safety measures such as avoiding spending time outdoors.
2. Pay attention to visibility guides if they are available. Although not every community measures the amount of particles in the air, some communities have guidelines to help people estimate air quality based on how far they can see.
3. If you are told to stay indoors, stay indoors and keep your indoor air as clean as possible. Keep windows and doors closed unless it is very hot outside. Run an air conditioner if you have one, but keep the fresh-air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent outdoor smoke from getting inside. Seek shelter elsewhere if you do not have an air conditioner and it is too warm to stay inside with the windows closed.
4. Use an air filter. Use a freestanding indoor air filter with particle removal to help protect people with heart disease, asthma or other respiratory conditions and the elderly and children from the effects of wildfire smoke. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on filter replacement and where to place the device.
5. Do not add to indoor pollution. When smoke levels are high, do not use anything that burns, such as candles and fireplaces. Do not vacuum, because vacuuming stirs up particles already inside your home. Do not smoke tobacco or other products, because smoking puts even more pollution into the air.
6. Follow your doctor's advice about medicines and about your respiratory management plan if you have asthma or another lung disease or cardiovascular disease. Call your doctor if your symptoms worsen.
7. Do not rely on dust masks for protection. Paper "comfort" or "dust" masks commonly found at hardware stores trap large particles, such as sawdust. These masks will not protect your lungs from smoke. An "N95" mask, properly worn, will offer some protection. If you decide to keep a mask on hand, see the [Respirator Fact Sheet](#) provided by CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.
8. Avoid smoke exposure during outdoor recreation. Wildfires and prescribed burns—fires that are set on purpose to manage land—can create smoky conditions. Before you travel to a park or forest, check to see if any wildfires are happening or if any prescribed burns are planned.

Additional resources and frequently asked questions are available from:

- The Government of Canada [Air Quality Health Index](#)
- The Government of Canada [Guidance for Cleaner Air Space during Wildfire Smoke Events](#)
- The Government of Alberta [Air Quality Advisory](#)
- The Government of British Columbia at [Wildfire Smoke: FAQ's](#)
- The Government of Northwest Territories [Air Quality](#)
- The Government of Yukon [Air Quality](#)
- [Firesmoke.ca](#)

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