



Wildfires and Health: How to Protect Yourself

Wildfires: An Overview

Wildfires are unplanned fires that burn in forests and other areas. They are caused by both human-made and natural events. The smoke and byproducts of wildfires can travel long distances and affect large populations. Due to land and forest management practices, and global environmental changes, the risk of wildfires in North America is increasing.

Wildfires and Health

Wildfires are increasingly recognized as major health threats. Fires can release large amounts of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter into the air. These pollutants can lead to several health effects.

Who is most vulnerable?

- People with lung and heart disease
- Pregnant women
- Older adults
- Infants and young children



Health risks from wildfire smoke:

- Decreased lung function
- Coughing and wheezing
- Lung inflammation
- Bronchitis
- Worsening of asthma
- Other lung diseases
- Worsening heart disease
- Eye irritation
- Burns and injuries

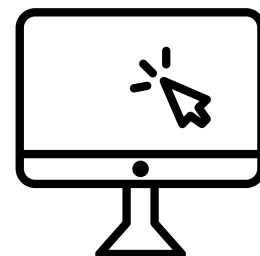




How do I protect myself from wildfire smoke?

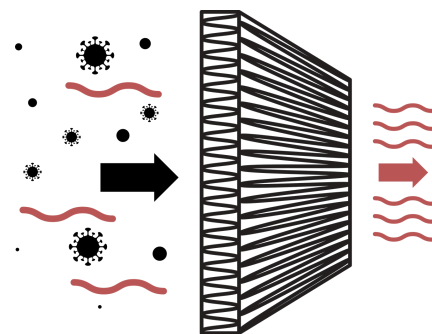
① Monitor your air quality

Use AirNow.gov to monitor your location's Air Quality Index (AQI)- which measures the pollution level in the air.



② Take action!

- Go indoors and close all windows, doors, and any other openings.
- Use an effective air filter, like a MERV13, or an air purifier indoors.
- In the car, close windows, use air conditioning and recirculate the air.
- When outdoors, wear a well fitted N-95 mask.



Air Quality Index:



Take action
when the AQI
number is at the
"Orange" level
or higher.

**0-50**

Good

51-100

Moderate

101-150Unhealthy for sensitive
groups**151-200**

Unhealthy

201-300

Very unhealthy

300+

Hazardous

Please see http://mleead.umich.edu/Coec_Fact_Sheets.php for the citations included in this factsheet.

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