

Seasonal Health Alert: Wildfire Smoke

Wildfire smoke contains small particles and chemicals that can cause minor to serious health effects. Minor symptoms include eye irritation, sore throat, runny nose, headaches, wheezing, coughing, and shortness of breath. More serious effects include worsening of lung, heart, and circulatory conditions, triggering asthma attacks, or causing chest tightness.

While smoke is unhealthy for everyone, some people are more susceptible: infants, children, pregnant people, older adults, and those with heart or lung disease, diabetes, or respiratory illnesses. **Call us (1-800-222-1222) with any questions or concerns with wildfire smoke and your health.**

Stay informed

- Check daily air quality and wildfire activity with the [Washington State Smoke blog](#).

Minimize exposure

- Stay indoors in “clean air” whenever possible.
- When outside, only [properly fitted NIOSH-certified N95 respirator masks](#) provide protection.
 - Cloth and surgical masks will **not** filter out smoke particles.
 - Ask a healthcare provider before using masks on young children or people with chronic illnesses.

Optimize indoor air

- Keep windows and doors closed.
- Improve filtration:
 - Build your own [box fan filter](#) or use a portable [air cleaner](#) with a HEPA or MERV 13 filter.
 - For HVAC systems, use the highest-rated filter your system can handle and set air to recirculate.
 - Avoid activities that add particles: burning candles or incense, smoking, broiling or frying food, or vacuuming without a HEPA filter.
- If you can't maintain clean indoor air, know where to go: friends or relatives' homes, designated clean air centers, etc.

Keep a plan for smoky days

- Refill essential medications.
- Prep any specialized equipment, like a box fan filter.
- Create an evacuation plan that includes a cleaner air space.
- Know who to call for help, including us (1-800-222-1222).

Ease your symptoms

- Use artificial tear eye drops to relieve eye irritation.
- Keep yourself, family, pets, and livestock well hydrated. Store extra water for emergencies.
- Reduce physical activity, especially if you are sensitive to smoke or if you have a lung and/or heart condition, such as asthma.