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Health officials urge residents to take precautions due to wildfire smoke

The Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality are offering Oregonians ways to identify poor air quality conditions and tips to stay healthy and safe during fire season.

Wildfires across the state are creating hazardous and smoky conditions. This week, smoke from several fires started by lightning strikes over the weekend and larger fires already burning in the region may continue to drift into Oregon communities and rapidly degrade air quality.

“People with chronic lung or heart conditions, the elderly and children have higher risk of health problems from the fine particles in wildfire smoke,” said Bruce Gutelius, M.D., M.P.H., deputy state epidemiologist with the Oregon Public Health Division. “People who suffer from asthma or other respiratory conditions should follow their breathing management plans, keep medications on hand, and contact health care providers if necessary.”

DEQ and local county health departments urge residents to take the following precautions to avoid breathing problems or other symptoms from smoke:

- Be aware of smoke concentrations in your area and avoid the places with highest concentrations.

(more)

- Residents can check the current local air quality conditions on [DEQ's website](#) or call 503-229-6397. Avoid outdoor activities when air quality is unhealthy and hazardous.
- To avoid smoke either leave the area or protect yourself by staying indoors, closing as many windows and doors as possible without letting your home overheat, and using a filter in your heating or cooling system that removes very fine particulate matter.
- Avoid strenuous outdoor activity in smoky conditions. Young children and persons with heart or lung problems are especially vulnerable.
- Persons suffering from asthma or other respiratory problems should follow their breathing management plans or contact their health care providers.

Helpful links:

- [DEQ's Air Quality Index](#) for current air quality conditions
- [Oregon Smoke blog](#) for the latest on fires across the state

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