



ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



## STAYING SAFE IN WILDFIRE SMOKE

*Wildfire smoke is likeliest to occur between March and October. It can cause significant health issues, including respiratory problems, eye irritation, and rarely, heart attack or stroke. Make sure to check in on friends, family members, and neighbours who are vulnerable to the impacts of wildfire smoke and minimize your own exposure. Together, we can get through wildfire season safely.*

### Who should be concerned about wildfire smoke?

Wildfire smoke can affect anyone. However, some groups, including those mentioned below, are likelier to be impacted by it.

If you or a loved one belongs to one or more of these groups, consider taking extra precautions to minimize your exposure. Act quickly if you or your loved ones are experiencing severe health issues after being exposed to wildfire smoke.

- ∞ Babies and young children
- ∞ Older adults
- ∞ Pregnant people
- ∞ People with chronic or pre-existing physical or mental health conditions
- ∞ People who work outdoors
- ∞ People who are experiencing homelessness

**Please note:** If your community is experiencing both extreme heat and poor air quality, it is essential to prioritize the prevention of heat-related illnesses.

If you have any questions,  
please contact  
[wildfires@metis.org](mailto:wildfires@metis.org)



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Environment and Climate Change  
780-455-2200 • 1-817-454-0684 • [wildfires@metis.org](mailto:wildfires@metis.org)

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## How does wildfire smoke exposure affect my health?

Wildfire smoke can cause health issues that range from mild to severe. By knowing what these issues are, you can respond to concerning symptoms quickly.

<b>Mild Symptoms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headache</li><li>• Mild cough</li><li>• Mucus</li><li>• Irritated eyes, nose, throat, or sinuses</li></ul>
<b>Severe Symptoms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dizziness or wheezing</li><li>• Chest pain or a severe cough</li><li>• Trouble breathing or asthma attacks</li><li>• Irregular heartbeat</li></ul>
<b>Rare Symptoms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stroke or heart attack</li><li>• Premature death</li><li>• Pregnancy complications like low birth weight</li></ul>

**Please note:** For more information, call Health Link at 811 or use Alberta Health Services' Healthwise Symptom Checker at [myhealth.alberta.ca/health/Pages/conditions.aspx](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/Pages/conditions.aspx). **If the person is experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.**



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## How can I protect myself from wildfire smoke?

The best way to reduce exposure to wildfire smoke is to stay indoors. You can decrease the amount of smoke that enters your home by closing doors and windows. If you have air purifiers, run them to further improve your indoor air quality.

If you or a loved one begins to experience mild symptoms, such as coughing or throat irritation, try one or more of these options:

- ∞ Go to a public location with filtered air.
- ∞ Consider building a low-cost air filter if you don't have an air purifier. You can follow along with our air filter tutorial at [instagram.com/reel/DLIVYQ5q3fs/](https://www.instagram.com/reel/DLIVYQ5q3fs/)
- ∞ Wear a well-fitted N95, KN95, or KF94 mask. Please note that these masks don't protect against gases and aren't safe for the following groups:
  - ∞ Children under 2
  - ∞ People who struggle to breathe in a mask
  - ∞ Anyone who needs help to remove the mask



Scan to watch  
our DIY air filter  
tutorial video

**Please note:** If symptoms do not improve, connect with a medical professional for more guidance. **If it's an emergency, call 911.**



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