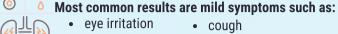


Wildfire Smoke and Air Quality Reference Guide for Indigenous Communities (2024)



Symptoms From Exposure to Smoke



- eye irritation
- throat irritation
- runny nose

wheezing

cough

headaches

More severe symptoms include:

- dizziness
- · difficulty breathing
- chest pains
- heart palpitation

- DEPRESSION
- **POST-TRAUMATIC** STRESS DISORDER

GENERAL DISTRESS CAUSED BY NATURAL DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Don't be afraid to reach out if you need help:

Hope for Wellness Helpline for Indigenous Peoples

Health 811 | Kids Help Phone | Mental Health Support

may experience worsening mental health impacts such as:

Mental Health Impacts Individuals living close to an active wildfire or within a smoke event



Exposure to wildfire smoke can make existing diseases worse such as:



CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE



CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) Explained

- A tool to show the level of risk to your health of short-term exposure to air pollution in your area.
- It measures all air pollution, not just air pollution from fire smoke.
- It provides a scale of 1 to 10+ showing air quality levels from low, moderate, high, to very high health risk. As the number on the air quality scale goes up; the greater the risk to your health.

Health Risk According to AQHI Levels

Health Messages

Low AQHI 1-3

Moderate

Enjoy your usual outdoor activities.

AQHI 4-6



Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you are experiencing symptoms.

High **AQHI 7-10**



Reduce or reschedule strenuous activities outdoors. Children and the elderly should also take it easy.





Avoid strenuous activities outdoors. Children and the elderly should also avoid physical exertion.

Air Quality Health Index Categories, Values and **Associated Colours**

High Risk Low Risk Moderate Risk Very High (1-3)(4-6)(7-10)Risk (10+)

How to Prepare for Smoke Impact:







- Monitor changes in weather conditions with the WeatherCAN app.
- Sign up to receive emails when a Special Air Quality or Air Quality Advisory has been issued for certain region(s).
- Visit the Air Quality Ontario website that includes local readings and maximum forecast values for today, tonight and tomorrow.



Other helpful tools: These forecasts can offer information to predict how long wildfire smoke is expected to remain in an area.

FireSmoke Canada

Provides forecasts up to 48 hours in advance during wildfire season from April to September.



Government of Canada's FireWork System

From April to October (morning and evening), see how smoke from wildfire is expected to move across North America over the next 3 days.



Protect Yourself with a Respirator

When: If you must spend time outdoors.

What: NIOSH-certified N95 or equivalent respirator that does not allow air to pass through small openings between the mask and

Why: May help reduce your exposure to the fine particles in smoke, which pose the greatest risk to health. However, respirators do not reduce exposure to the gases in wildfire smoke.

Respirators should not be used by:

- Children under 2 years of age.
- Individuals who have trouble breathing while wearing the
- Someone who may need help to remove the respirator.

Where to get a respirator:

Your local Chief and Council, nursing station or health centre is able to access free respirators for community distribution.



