

WILDFIRE SMOKE AND YOUR HEALTH

Wildfire smoke is a complex mixture of **harmful particles, gases, and water vapour**. The mixture can change depending on the distance from the fire, the fuels burning, and the weather. Wildfire smoke causes episodes of the worst air quality that most people will ever experience in British Columbia.



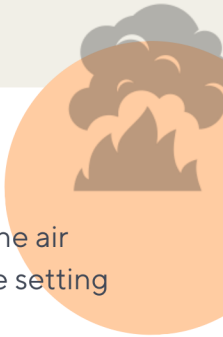
Short-term health risks

Your body tries to protect itself against smoke by making more tears and mucous. This can cause **runny noses, scratchy throat, irritated sinuses, headaches, and a cough**.

A number of adverse health conditions are linked to wildfire smoke, including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) exacerbations, bronchitis, pneumonia, high blood sugars and heart disease.

Who is at highest risk?

- **Children, seniors, and pregnant people** are at greater risk of adverse health effects from wildfire smoke. If you are pregnant, talk to your healthcare provider.
- People who have an **illness or chronic condition** are also at greater risk. These individuals may feel the effects of smoke earlier and worse than others.
- People who are **very active** doing work or sports outside are also at higher risk of adverse health effects.



How can I protect myself from the effects of smoke?

- Libraries, community centres, and shopping malls often have cooler, filtered air that can provide a break from outdoor smoke.
- Portable air cleaners that use HEPA filtration can effectively remove smoke particles from the indoor air.
- If you have forced air heating, you can use different filters and settings to minimize the amount of wildfire smoke that comes into your home.
- When driving, keep the windows up, the air conditioner on, and use the recirculate setting to limit intake of the outdoor air.
- The harder you breathe, the more smoke you inhale. Take it easy during smoky periods and consider exercising indoors.
- If you have an outdoor occupation, refer to resources from WorkSafe BC <https://u.nu/4vl8>
- Avoid using natural gas appliances to prevent further worsening of indoor air quality

Learn More

Link to the Government of Canada's Page on Wildfire Smoke, Air Quality, & Your Health
<https://rb.gy/ggs52g>



Learn More
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