



County of Yolo

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Bette G. Hinton, M.D. M.P.H
Director – Health Officer

10 Cottonwood Street, Woodland, CA 95695
PHONE - (530) 666-8645 FAX - (530) 666-8674

For Immediate Release:

Date: June 24, 2008
Contact: Cheryl Boney, Deputy Director Public Health Programs
Phone: (530) 666-8645

SMOKE IMPACTS AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH

Woodland—Fires burning throughout Northern and Central California continue to blow smoke into the Yolo County region.

Residents are urged to limit outdoor activities and to go inside if they are in an area where they can smell smoke. Breathing the pollutants in smoke is unhealthy. Short-term exposure can aggravate lung disease, increase the chance of respiratory infection and cause heart attacks in people with heart disease.

Older adults are more likely to be affected by smoke, possibly because they are more likely to have heart or lung diseases than younger people.

Children also are more susceptible to smoke for several reasons: their respiratory systems are still developing; they breathe more air (and air pollution) per pound of body weight than adults; and they're more likely to be active outdoors.

Even healthy people may experience irritation of the nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath.

How to Protect Your Family from the Health Effects of Smoke

-Pay attention to local air quality reports and stay alert to any news coverage or health warnings related to smoke.

-Use common sense. If it looks smoky outside, it's probably not a good time to mow the lawn or go for a run. And it's probably not a good time for your children to play outdoors.

-If you are advised to stay indoors, take steps to keep indoor air as clean as possible. Keep your windows and doors closed — unless it's extremely hot outside.

-Check the Air Quality Index (AQI) forecast for your area. The AQI, based on data from local air quality monitors, tells you about the daily air quality in your area and recommends precautions you can take to protect your health. As smoke gets worse, the concentration of particles in the air changes — and so do the steps you should take to protect yourself. For more information on air quality, go to the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District

website at www.sparetheair.com. You can also sign up for email alerts on air quality for your area.

-Run your air conditioner, if you have one. Keep the fresh air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent bringing additional smoke inside. Note: If you don't have an air conditioner, staying inside with the windows closed may be dangerous in extremely hot weather. In these cases, seek alternative shelter. If you are in your car, run your air conditioner and close the fresh air intake.

-Help keep particle levels inside lower. When smoke levels are high, try to avoid using anything that burns, such as wood fireplaces, gas logs, gas stoves — and even candles! Don't vacuum. That stirs up particles already inside your home. And don't smoke. That puts even more pollution in your lungs, and in the lungs of people around you. If you have asthma or other lung disease, make sure you follow your doctor's directions about taking your medicines and following your asthma management plan. Call your doctor if your symptoms worsen.

-If you have heart or lung disease, if you are an older adult, or if you have children, talk with your doctor about whether and when you should leave the area. When smoke is heavy for a prolonged period of time, fine particles can build up indoors even though you may not be able to see them.

These self help measures can help you get through poor air quality days. For more information, contact the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District at (800) 287-3650 or at www.ysaqmd.org. For health questions, contact your doctor.

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