

Brief Intervention for Wildfire Smoke Preparedness

Early preparation prevents wildfire smoke-related illness and death. Use this tool to help patients prepare for smoke.

The following factors put people at higher risk of smoke-related illness (**bolded especially high risk factors**):

- **Chronic respiratory disease, especially including asthma, COPD, and fibrosis**
- Other chronic diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, and cancer
- Younger age (infants and <5 years)
- Current respiratory infection
- **Pregnancy**
- Older age (≥65 years old)
- Cigarette smoking
- Strenuous outdoor exercise
- Outdoor work
- Marginal housing

ASK about preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are they prepared for wildfire smoke this year?</i>
ADVISE about effects of smoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform that they are at higher risk of experiencing health effects from wildfire smoke. • Inform that even small amounts of wildfire smoke can be harmful over time and encourage them to make ongoing efforts to keep the air they breathe clean during wildfire season.
ASSESS & ASSIST with preparedness	<p>Share and review the multi-lingual BCCDC Wildfire Smoke page Highlight How to prepare for the wildfire smoke season on this page</p> <p>1) Is their home prepared for wildfire smoke? Do they have a working air cleaner or ventilation system? Purchase a portable air cleaner that uses HEPA filtration to remove smoke from indoor air.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a portable air cleaner is not an option, make a box fan air filter. If forced air heating, suggest reviewing filters/settings for smoky conditions with service provider. • Review tax rebates available for purchasing air cleaners. <p>2) Do they know where to find information about local air quality conditions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Air Quality Health Index and guidance for “At Risk Population”. • Introduce AQmap.ca as the best source of information during smoky conditions. <p>3) How much of their medications do they have on hand/at home?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review supply of rescue bronchodilators and advise to always carry during wildfire season. <p>4) Do they know when they should seek urgent medical attention during wildfire smoke events?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek medical attention if shortness of breath, palpitations, chest pain, severe cough, dizziness. <p>5) Do they know what to do on smoky days to protect their health?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay inside with an air cleaner running as much as possible. • Keep smoke out by closing windows, doors and air intakes from furnaces, fireplaces and stoves. • Monitor air quality, stay hydrated and avoid exertion. • Reduce indoor air pollution (eg cooking with oil, tobacco or cannabis smoking, or using incense). • When driving, keep the windows up, AC on, and use the recirculate setting. • When outdoors, use a well-fitted respirator if comfortable wearing one (see details below) • If they are working outdoors, refer them to resources from WorkSafe BC:

	<p><u>If they can't keep their surrounding air clean and cool:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify friends or family they can stay with who have cleaner and cooler air. • Identify community locations (libraries, malls, community centers) with cooler, filtered air. <p><u>Recommendations for days with extreme heat and wildfire smoke:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients may be susceptible to both smoke and heat and they may have a synergistic effect. Extreme heat is usually a more immediate risk than smoke. • Prioritize staying cool if they cannot access both cooler and cleaner air at the same time. • Refer to BCCDC wildfire smoke during extreme heat events factsheet. <p>6) <i>Are they thinking about using a mask outdoors?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they plan to use a mask, a <i>well-fitted</i> respirator (e.g. N95) is most effective. • Remove while sleeping or if causing discomfort, difficulty breathing, or overheating. • Refer to BCCDC wildfire smoke and mask factsheet.
<p>ARRANGE for follow up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for further follow-up regarding wildfire smoke preparedness, if needed.

Additional patient resources

[Health effects of wildfire smoke](#)

[Choosing a portable air cleaner](#)

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