

What if you *do* work or play outside?

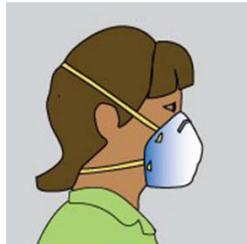
- Reduce your activity levels. Heavy exertion causes you to breathe deeper and inhale more smoke.
- Take frequent breaks in an indoor area with clear air.
- Consider using an N95 respirator (see below).
- Be sure to have respite at night - in clean indoor air!
- If you have medically managed asthma, have your rescue inhaler on-hand and follow your asthma plan.
- Don't be afraid to seek medical attention if you experience severe symptoms.

Cloth Masks, Respirators & Smoke

Cloth face coverings do not provide protection from wildfire smoke. Only respirators such as N95s can filter out the fine particles in the smoke. To stay safe, head indoors to a place with cleaner air, leave the smoky area, or, if you must be outside, consider using an N95 respirator. If you use a respirator, make sure it seals close to your face. Note that N95s do not come in children's sizes and facial hair can make it difficult to create a good seal. If you have difficulty breathing through the respirator, do not use it.

N95 Respirator Basics:

- Double strings: 1 above ear, 1 below
- Pinch at nose
- Labeled NIOSH + N95 or P100
- Mask should collapse as you breathe in and not let air in the sides.



We're in this **TOGETHER!**

There is plenty we can do, and we're stronger together. Check in on friends and neighbors. Do they have the ability to stay healthy? Consider buying a HEPA PAC or a DIY fan/filter for someone in need. Climate Smart Missoula has a "Pay It Forward" donation program (missoulaclimate.org/donate). And don't despair. The smoke will clear, and the skies will be blue and bright again soon!

Air Quality Can Change Hourly: Stay Informed with Air Quality Updates



Check Today's Air at
todaysair.mt.gov



Call the Missoula area air quality hotline at **406-258-3600**



Know the visibility "rules of thumb"
Cannot see 5 miles: **Unhealthy**
Cannot see 2 miles: **Very unhealthy**
Cannot see 1 mile: **Hazardous**



Learn and Prepare: MontanaWildfireSmoke.org

In addition to links to air quality reports and resources about health risks and what you can do, our **website** has links to nifty real-time maps that can show you where the fires are, where the smoke is coming from, and where it's projected to go. We also have information about our longer fires season, hotter summers and how we need to build a **Climate Ready Missoula** to address our changing climate and prepare.



When the smoke rolls into our valley it affects all of us. Climate change is bringing longer, higher intensity wildfire seasons, and we all need to be prepared. There are things we can do to stay healthy during wildfire season!

This brochure gives you the information you need to be ready for hotter, smokier summers, with information on:

- Wildfire smoke's effects on your health
- Checking local air quality updates
- Behavior changes that reduce your exposure
- Tools to create clean indoor air at home or small businesses
- Staying cool when it's hot and smoky
- And more!

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Missoula
COUNTY



United Way
of Missoula County



MontanaWildfireSmoke.org

Wildfire Smoke + Your Health

While the list of wildfire smoke pollutants is long, we're most concerned with fine particulate matter (PM2.5). These tiny particles can burrow deep into your lungs and even pass into your bloodstream where they set off an inflammatory response. They cause more frequent and severe asthma attacks, worsened COPD symptoms, increased risk of heart attack and strokes, increased susceptibility to infectious disease, reduced lung function, increased hospitalizations, and even death. Children, the elderly, people with heart and lung disease, and pregnant people are most at risk. Even if you are not in a high-risk category, wildfire smoke is bad for you, and the longer you're in it, the worse it gets.



When you breathe in smoke, you may experience coughing, trouble breathing, stinging eyes, running nose, scratchy throat, headaches, irregular heartbeat, exhaustion, and grumpiness. Don't despair -- keep reading!

Change Behavior, Reduce Risk!

Even if we can't control when the smoke arrives or how long it stays, there ARE things we can do to reduce our exposure and its unhealthy effects, like:

- Limit intensity and duration of outside activities
- Head indoors, close windows and doors (if not too hot!), and **create clean air** (next section)
- Avoid adding particulate matter to your home: don't burn things like candles, cigarettes, or incense, and avoid or limit vacuuming and stove-top cooking.

Create Clean Indoor Air at Home or Work

We highly recommend adding these to your home or business. See next section for forced air or A/C systems.

- 1. Purchase a HEPA Portable Air Cleaner (PAC)**
 - HEPA PACs remove PM2.5 from indoor air.
 - They cost ~\$100-\$200.
 - Get a PAC large enough for the room it's in.
 - Place it in a room where you spend a lot of time -- bedrooms are good! Close the doors and windows in that room so air can circulate through the filter.
 - Consider more than one PAC for different rooms.
- 2. Purchase additional filters for your PAC**
 - If you already own a HEPA PAC, make sure you have extra replacement filters - they do get dirty!
- 3. Make a DIY boxfan/filter combo air cleaner**
 - High efficiency filters (MERV 13) can be purchased at a hardware store or online and easily attached to a boxfan. These combos are louder than HEPA PACs, but lower cost and nearly as efficient. Use a newer fan (manufactured after 2011). See our website for simple directions + safety guidance.



Learn more and prepare:

MontanaWildfireSmoke.org

On our website, you'll find HEPA PAC and filter consumer guides, DIY fan/filter instructions, advice on HVAC systems, air quality improvement tips for commercial buildings, and so much more.

More about Clean Indoor Air -- Forced Air for Heating & Cooling

A few basics. See our website for more!

- 1. Running your forced air system**
 - Keep the furnace fan on (i.e., uncouple it from the thermostat) for continuous cleaning.
- 2. Upgrade your HVAC filter**
 - Use the highest efficiency filter your system can handle. A MERV 13 or better is best, but MERV 11 or 12 will still help clean the air. Keep extra filters on hand and change them when they get dirty.
 - If your air handler cannot use a better filter, use PACs or DIY combos to clean individual rooms.

What about our PETS?

Our furry friends are also sensitive to wildfire smoke. You may need to bring them inside more and curtail their exercise.



Hot and Smoky?

It is very important to avoid heat stress. Stay hydrated, reduce activity, and stay out of the direct sun. Do you:

Have central air conditioning?

- Try using your air handler to keep cool and, by installing a better filter, clean the air at the same time! Check with an HVAC technician if you are unsure if your system can use a better filter.

Have a window A/C unit?

- Place a HEPA PAC or a DIY fan/filter combo in the same room with the A/C unit to remove pollutants that may leak in and turn off the outdoor air intake.

Have no air conditioning?

- Open your windows at night for cooling. After you close the windows, use PACs or DIY fan/filter combos to remove smoke that enters.
- Consider staying somewhere with cool air or leave the area until the smoke clears.

