



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Protecting Southern Oregonians from Dangerous Wildfire Smoke

AllCare Health, Josephine County Public Health, and PrimaryHealth provide tips for Southern Oregonians who want to protect themselves from the poor air quality.

GRANTS PASS, Ore.—Forest fires are heavily impacting southern Oregon residents'. AllCare Health, Josephine County Public Health, and Primary Health have come together to provide important information on how the public can protect themselves from the poor air quality.

First and foremost, we encourage everyone to reduce physical activity and remain in a filtered, air-conditioned, indoor location as much as possible. Keeping windows and doors closed, and using a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter in central air systems will improve the quality of air indoors. In addition, residents should avoid additional pollutants such as smoking, gas or propane, and dust.

All outdoor activity should be limited to necessary and brief outings only. Suspending outdoor recreation until air quality improves is advised. If the need to be outside is required, a N-95 or P-100 respirator (mask) offers limited protection against small particles, if fitted properly. These masks can be found at some hardware stores and pharmacies. It is important to note that these masks do not protect against harmful gases.

"Inhaling small particles from smoke can have lasting effects on the respiratory system. Lowering your activity level and staying in filtered air indoors will limit your exposure to those harmful particles," says AllCare Independent Physician Association member, Dr. Carlos Marchini, MD, D, ABSM, FCCP. "When you must go outside, make sure your N95 mask is worn and correctly fitted. If you're unsure about the fit of your mask or if you have heart or lung conditions, speak with your doctor before wearing a mask."

When going outside is unavoidable, here are important things to remember when choosing a mask:

- Choose an N95 or N100 mask that has two straps that go around your head.
- Choose a size that fits over your nose and under your chin. It must seal tightly to your face.
- These masks don't come in sizes that fit young children.
- These masks only offer limited protection and should not be relied upon to protect against resuming normal outdoor activity levels.
- Don't use bandanas or towels (wet or dry) or tissue held over the mouth and nose. These may relieve dryness but they won't protect your lungs from wildfire smoke.

People with lung or heart diseases, such as congestive heart failure, angina, COPD, emphysema, or asthma are at a higher risk of health problems from smoke. Seniors and children are also more at risk for health problems when exposed to dangerous smoke. Since masks make breathing more difficult, please see your doctor for advice about whether you should or should not wear a mask.

For more information about what to do in smoky conditions, visit <https://apps.state.or.us/Forms/Served/le8622.pdf>.

For answers to commonly asked questions about wildfire smoke and what to do in smoky conditions, visit <https://apps.state.or.us/Forms/Served/le8626.pdf>