



5 Steps to Ready

Wildfire smoke can harm your health — even hundreds of miles from the fire. Smoke that has traveled far may not smell or look like smoke and instead appear as haze. By planning, you can protect yourself and your family.

1. Make a Plan

- ☐ Pick a cleaner air space in your home — ideally a room with few windows and doors — where family members can stay when smoke is heavy. If you can, place an air purifier in this space.
- ☐ Know where to go for cleaner air if you cannot create a cleaner air space at home. Options may include a library, community center, shopping mall, or official cleaner air site opened by your city or county. Check your local government website or call to learn what spaces are available during wildfire smoke events.
- ☐ Know who in your home and neighborhood may need additional support: children, older adults, pregnant people and those living with lung or heart conditions, as well as people who live or work outdoors. Encourage these people to create a plan and talk to their health provider.
- ☐ On poor air quality days, plan to limit time spent outdoors. Even brief outdoor activities can increase smoke exposure and health impacts.
- ☐ Pets need protection, too. Bring them indoors and have a plan for their care if you need to leave. Wash them thoroughly if they are exposed to ash or debris.
- ☐ Understand that wildfire smoke can affect your mood, sleep, and stress levels, not just your physical health. Plan ahead for ways to cope, such as indoor activities, staying connected, and keeping a routine.

2. Build a Kit

- ☐ Have N95 masks or P100 respirators for each household member. Cloth and surgical masks do not filter smoke particles effectively. Note that standard masks do not fit young children well. Ask your pediatrician in advance about the best options for them.
- ☐ Use an air purifier with a HEPA filter to create a cleaner air room. Have extra filters on hand and replace them after each smoke event.
- ☐ Store at least three days of food, water, and supplies so you can reduce your time outdoors.
- ☐ Make sure you have enough medication on hand, particularly if anyone in your household lives with a lung or heart condition. Aim for at least a week's supply ahead of smoke season.

3. Protect Your Indoor Air

During smoke events, the air inside your home matters as much as the air outside:

- ☐ Close your windows, doors, and fireplace damper when there is smoke outdoors. However, if you are unable to keep your home cool with windows closed, seek a cooler cleaner air space.
- ☐ Seal gaps under and around doors and windows using weatherstripping, tape, caulk, or towels.

- ☐ If you have an air conditioner that pulls in outside air, change the settings to recirculate and/or close any outside air vents. However, most air conditioners do not pull in outside air, so this might not apply to you.
- ☐ Run a portable HEPA air purifier in the room where your household spends the most time. Make sure the unit is sized for the room.
- ☐ Avoid activities that add pollutants to indoor air: don't fry food, burn candles, use gas stoves, or vacuum.

4. Stay Informed

Smoke is not always visible. Particularly when it travels far, smoke can look like haze on the horizon, so don't judge air quality by appearance alone.

- ☐ Check the Air Quality Index (AQI) regularly — the higher the number, the worse the air quality.
During a smoke event, check at least morning and evening, and again if conditions appear to change.
0–50: Good
51–100: Moderate
101–150: Unhealthy for sensitive groups
151–200: Unhealthy for everyone
200+: Very unhealthy or hazardous ([Click here for more info.](#))
- ☐ For the most accurate picture of your neighborhood's air, look for a nearby local monitor. [OpenAQ](#) can help you find one. If no local monitor is available, [National Maps | AirNow.gov](#) and other reliable air quality apps are good alternatives.
- ☐ Sign up for local emergency alerts on your phone, which can include no-burn notices, air quality advisories, and evacuation warnings.

5. During a Smoke Event

- ☐ Implement your plan.
- ☐ Protect your indoor air.
- ☐ Check your local air quality throughout the day.
- ☐ If possible, time any outdoor activities when the AQI is low. Wear a mask if possible.
- ☐ Check in on family, friends, and neighbors.
- ☐ Limit your exposure to distressing news, stay connected with friends and family, and try not to dwell on the smoke. Reach out for support if you need it.