Wildfire Smoke and Air Quality
August 20, 2015

Air quality in our area is being impacted from recent wildfires. Ongoing observation of air quality has shown conditions worsening, reaching an “unhealthy” level for air quality in affected community areas.

Under these conditions, even healthy people can have breathing problems. People with asthma, lung and heart disease have an increased risk of symptoms or worsening of their disease. It should be stressed that wildfire smoke is not a major health threat for most people under most conditions. However, for sensitive groups, it can be a serious issue.

People in impacted areas should consider the following:

- Stay indoors as much as possible and do only light activities.
- Keep outside doors and windows closed if it is not too hot
- Run air conditioners on re-circulation mode and close outside air intakes
- While driving vehicles, use the AC but set it to re-circulate.
- Use indoor air cleaners with HEPA filters if you have them.
- If you spend time outdoors in heavily impacted areas, consider wearing an N-95 respirator mask. People with chronic disease should check with their health care provider before wearing a mask as wearing one can make it more difficult to breath. More information about proper mask use can be found at [http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/334-353.pdf](http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/334-353.pdf).

N-95 respiratory masks have been distributed to the following locations:

- Republic: American Red Cross Shelter at Republic High School
- Kettle Falls: City Hall, Visitor/Information Building
- Hunters: Columbia School
- Colville: Walmart Pharmacy, Super 1 Pharmacy, Safeway Pharmacy, Ambulance Fair Booth
- Arden: Arden Fire Hall, Arden 1-Stop
- Addy: Old Schoolhouse Trading Post Gas Station
- Cusick/Usk Area: Panther Pit Stop, Kalispel Rest Area Coffee Shop
- Newport: Safeway, Seaver’s Pharmacy

- In hot weather conditions, keep hydrated and avoid heat exhaustion.
- If you live in a heavily impacted area, consider going to an area with better air quality until conditions improve. In some areas, shelters are set up and available.
- If you have symptoms of lung or heart disease that have been worsened by smoke exposure, contact your health care provider as soon as you can.
- Air quality conditions can change rapidly. If conditions worsen, take precautions to limit your exposure to smoke. If it looks and smells smoky outside, it is probably not a good time to go for a jog, do strenuous yard work, or allow children to engage in vigorous outdoor activities.

With school and school athletic activities beginning, the school guide, [Air Pollution and School Activities](#), provides recommendations for recess, P.E., and athletic events/practices. If assistance is needed in making determinations on levels of air quality and school activities, Contact Northeast Tri County Health District.

More information can be bound at the [Washington State Department of Health Wildfire Smoke](#) webpage.

For additional information, contact Matt Schanz, Environmental Public Health Director for Northeast Tri County Health District at:

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