

Wildfire Smoke and Air Quality



With the increase in forest fires over the past few years, summers have gotten smoky. Wildfire smoke can be carried thousands of kilometers from the fire zone, so it's important to be mindful of the air quality even when there are no fires nearby.

Wildfire smoke is a mix of gases, particles, and water vapour. Fine particles represent the main health risk from wildfire smoke. These particles aren't visible to the human eye and have been linked to a wide range of health effects: headaches, coughs, dizziness, wheezing, chest pains, asthma attacks, heart palpitations, and nose, throat, sinus, and eye irritation.



The air quality is available on most weather apps, as well as the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) on the government of Canada's weather website, www.weather.gc.ca. It's a good guideline to follow, but if you **ever** experience symptoms of smoke exposure, try to remain indoors and avoid activities outside, regardless of the AQHI.

AQHI	Health Risk	At Risk Population	General Population
1-3	Low	Resume your usual outdoor activities	Ideal air quality for outdoor activities
4-6	Moderate	Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you begin to experience symptoms.	No need to modify your usual outdoor activities unless you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.
7-10	High	Reduce or reschedule strenuous activity outdoors. Children and the elderly should take it easy.	Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you experience symptoms like coughing and throat irritation
10+	Very High	Avoid strenuous activities. Children and the elderly should also avoid outdoor physical exertion.	Reduce or reschedule strenuous activity outdoors, especially if you experience coughing and throat irritation