

The Michigan Climate and Health Program (MICHAP) has newly updated materials on wildfire smoke and our health. You are encouraged to share widely.

- *Wildfire Smoke Factsheet*
- *Sample Social Media Posts (Pages 9-17)*
- *Activity Guidance for Everyone and Sensitive Populations (attached)*
- *MDHHS general air quality press release published May 21, 2024*
- *Key messages/talking points for Air Quality Press Release (attached)*

While Canada is currently at a Wildfire National Preparedness Level of 5 and some northern Plains states are experiencing an increase in wildfire smoke, the smoke is not forecasted to impact Michigan. The distance between the current fires and us here in Michigan allows for the smoke to disperse into the upper atmosphere and not impact our surface air quality. MICHAP will share updates if the situation changes.

AIR QUALITY INDEX	Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 Guidelines for Everyone: Modifying Indoor and Outdoor Activities
Green: Good (0 - 50)	Everyone can enjoy being outside.
Yellow: Moderate (51 - 100)	Most everyone can enjoy being outside. For those who are unusually sensitive* to fine particles from wildfire smoke, monitor for symptoms** and consider making outdoor activities shorter and less intense.
Orange: Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101 - 150)	- People living with lung and heart disease, adults aged 60+, pregnant people and children should make outdoor activities shorter and less intense. - Prevent smoke from entering homes by closing windows and minimizing the opening of outside doors. If HVAC systems are not equipped with MERV 13 filters or higher, use portable air cleaners to maintain good indoor air quality. If possible, close the outdoor air intake on air conditioners.
Red: Unhealthy for Everyone (151 - 200)	- Everyone should reduce long or intense outdoor activities. People living with lung and heart disease, adults aged 60+, pregnant people and children are recommended to seek cleaner air indoors. - Prevent smoke from entering homes by closing windows and minimizing the opening of outside doors. If HVAC systems are not equipped with MERV 13 filters or higher, use portable air cleaners to maintain good indoor air quality. If possible, close the outdoor air intake on air conditioners. - Masks*** are recommended for children, pregnant people and other sensitive people while outdoors.
Purple: Very Unhealthy (201 - 300)	- Everyone should avoid long or intense outdoor activities and reschedule or move all outdoor activities indoors, if possible. People living with lung and heart disease, adults aged 60+, pregnant people and children are recommended to seek cleaner air indoors and keep activity levels low. - Prevent smoke from entering homes by closing windows and minimizing the opening of outside doors. If HVAC systems are not equipped with MERV 13 filters or higher, use portable air cleaners to maintain good indoor air quality. If possible, close the outdoor air intake on air conditioners. - Create clean-air rooms where children and other sensitive people can stay and be further evaluated if needed. - Masks*** are recommended for all people if they must be outside. - If you are unable to stay inside your own house, you are recommended to seek a temporary shelter location that has clean indoor air.
Maroon: Hazardous (300+)	- Everyone should seek cleaner air indoors and keep activity levels low. - Prevent smoke from entering homes by closing windows and minimizing the opening of outside doors. If HVAC systems are not equipped with MERV 13 filters or higher, use portable air cleaners to maintain good indoor air quality. If possible, close the outdoor air intake on air conditioners. - Create clean-air rooms where children and other sensitive populations can stay and be further evaluated if needed. - Masks*** are recommended for all people if they must be outside. - If you are unable to stay inside your own house, you are recommended to seek a temporary shelter location that has clean indoor air.
*Unusually sensitive may include those with asthma, other respiratory conditions or heart conditions. **Symptoms could include wheezing, coughing, chest tightness, dizziness or burning in nose, throat and eyes. ***Masks: During a wildfire smoke event, the best place to be is inside with good air quality. If you cannot avoid wildfire smoke, use an N95 or P100 respirator marked with "NIOSH." The respirator should fit tightly, collapse as you breathe in and not let air in from the sides. If N95 or P100 respirators are not available or do not fit well, properly selected KN95 and KF94 respirators also filter particulate matter. Medical or surgical masks are the least effective option and should only be used as a last resort. Cloth, paper masks and tissues will not filter out wildfire smoke. Do not use masks for children under age 2.	

Download EPA's AirNow app or visit [AirNow.gov](https://www.airnow.gov) to learn more and be aware of air quality alerts in your community.

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Press Release Title: [MDHHS offers tips to stay healthy during poor air quality days](#)

Date: May 21, 2024

Top Line:

1. What: The two threats to air quality we are addressing in this press release include: **ozone exacerbated by hot temperatures** and **fine particulate matter (particularly PM2.5) from wildfire smoke**.
2. When: The [North American wildfire season](#) is typically May through October. For heat, [above normal temperatures](#) are expected for Michigan this spring and summer.
3. Who: While everyone should be aware of poor air quality conditions, **groups at greater risk from the health impacts of poor air quality include:** those with heart or lung disease, pregnant individuals, older adults, children, outdoor workers, and more.
4. How can we prepare for possible wildfire smoke?
 - There are three things Michiganders can do to protect their health during poor air quality days: monitor, prepare, and connect.
 - (1) for **MONITORING**: you can Subscribe for alerts at [EnviroFlash.info](#) and check your local air quality at [airnow.gov](#)
 - (2) To **PREPARE** for a wildfire smoke event:
 - (1) [familiarize yourself with your HVAC system \(heat, ventilation, and cooling\). Double check if your system can handle a MERV 13 or higher filter. Make sure your windows are well-sealed and check if you are able to close any outdoor air intake on your HVAC system and set the system to recirculate indoor air.](#)
 - (2) If your ventilation or cooling system cannot do those things, then consider getting supplies to [create a clean air room](#) such as a portable air cleaner or a do-it-yourself air cleaner with a MERV 13 or higher filter and a box fan that is a 2012 or newer model
5. (3) Lastly, **CONNECT**: Reach out to your community members to ensure they have a plan for poor air quality days. If you are in a group at greater risk from health impacts, contact your healthcare provider to make a plan. Examples include those with heart or lung disease, pregnant individuals, older adults, children, and outdoor workers.
6. You can learn more about Michigan's Climate and Health Program at [michigan.gov/climateandhealth](#)
7. If there is a wildfire smoke event, what should we do?
 - (1) Seek clean indoor air
 - (2) Depending on the AQI level, limit outdoor activities and strenuous activities
 - (3) Monitor symptoms such as difficulty breathing and coughing
 - (4) When avoiding wildfire smoke is not possible, you can use a well-fitting N95 or P100 respirator marked with "NIOSH." If those are not available or do not fit well, properly selected KN95 and KF94 respirators also filter particulate matter. Medical or surgical masks are the least effective option and should be used as a last resort. Cloth, paper masks, and tissues will not filter out wildfire smoke.

[See Page 2 below]

Supporting Information:

Wildfire Smoke

- As we saw in 2023 with [Canada](#), wildfire smoke can impact the air quality in locations hundreds of miles away.

- The [Air Quality Index \(AQI\)](#), which can be found on the [AirNow website](#), is a color-coded way for residents to see what the levels of some types of air pollution are in their area. The higher the AQI, the worse the air quality is and the greater cause for concern.
- [Short-term health impacts](#) can include coughing, difficulty breathing, irritated eyes, bronchitis, as well as heart failure, heart attack and stroke.
- There is also evidence that wildfire smoke can [increase the risk for preterm birth](#). And that air pollution in general is [associated with increased risk of psychiatric disorders](#)
 - (note there are multiple sources of air pollution outside of PM2.5. Other sources include: ozone, carbon monoxide, lead, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide.)
- While we're talking about smoke from large fires outside of Michigan, wildfires do occur in Michigan and DNR has great resources for [prevention](#).

Ozone

- It is important on days with high ozone levels to avoid areas with high ozone or, if that's not possible, to avoid strenuous outdoor activities, especially for those with respiratory diseases such as asthma.
- People and businesses are urged to avoid activities which can lead to ozone formation. These activities include:
 - refueling vehicles or topping off when refueling;
 - idling cars;
 - using gasoline powered lawn or landscaping equipment;
 - using charcoal lighter fluid.