

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 8/04/2017

TO: Grant County Media
Grant County Healthcare Providers

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

Heather Massart, Public Information Officer
509-750-0481

Theresa Adkinson, Administrator
509-793-3520

Grant County Public Health Air Quality Advisory

The Grant County Health District has issued an air advisory as a result of wildfire smoke affecting the air quality in Grant County and the North Central Washington area. The smoke is not expected to clear in the near future keeping the air quality between unhealthy for sensitive groups and unhealthy for all groups. Dr. Brzezny, the Grant County Health Officer and GCHD endorse statewide recommendations of following the air quality index (located below).

Poor air quality and inhaling wildfire smoke is not good for anyone, but can significantly impact people with asthma and other lung diseases, as well as infants, children, pregnant women and older adults. Levels of pollutants that may not affect healthy people may cause breathing difficulties for these individuals.

Wildfire smoke is a mixture of gases and fine particles released when things burn. In addition to burning your eyes, these fine particles and gases can be inhaled deep into your lungs. This makes it harder to breathe and may worsen other chronic health conditions.

To reduce the risks to vulnerable individuals, GCHD recommends the following:

- **If it looks smoky outside, it is probably not a good time for any outdoor activities.**
 - **GCHD is encouraging all coaches to check the visibility and the quality of air before hosting outdoor practices/ activities and to seek opportunities to move practices/ activities indoors.**
- Minimize the use of indoor air pollutants such as candles, incense, and wood burning stoves.
- Routinely check on children, the elderly and friends and family who have breathing problems when outdoor air quality is unhealthy.

An N95 or P100 mask that is **properly fitted** and **worn correctly** may provide some protection against outdoor wildfire smoke, a dust or surgical mask will NOT protect you from the fine particles present in wildfire smoke.

GCHD and Grant County Emergency Management have teamed up with many local cities in Grant county to set up county-wide distribution points for N-95 masks related to the current smoke situation. The distribution sites, as of noon 8/4/17, will be:

- Moses Lake Fire Department
- Ephrata City Hall
- Quincy City Hall
- Mattawa City Hall
- Warden City Hall
- Royal City, City Hall
- Wilson Creek Farm Supply
- Soap Lake City Hall
- George City Hall
- Grand Coulee City Hall
- Electric City, City Hall

To help protect you and your family, you can make personal observations to determine outdoor air quality in your immediate surroundings.

- Face away from the sun.
- Determine the limit of your visibility range by looking at targets at known distances (miles).
- The visible range is the point at which even high-contrast objects (e.g. a dark building or water tower viewed against the sky at noon) totally disappear.
- After determining visibility in miles, use the table below to identify potential health effects and appropriate cautionary activities.

Helpful web sites

- Washington Smoke Information: <http://wasmoke.blogspot.com>
- National Weather Service Western Region: www.wrh.noaa.gov
- Washington State Department of Ecology <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/enviwa/Default.htm>
- Washington State Dept of Health – Frequently Asked Questions about Smoke: www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/AirQuality/OutdoorAir/SmokeFromFires/WildfireSmoke.aspx

Visibility in Miles	Air Quality Index	Health Category	Health Effects and Actions to Take
10 or more	0-50	Good	None
5-10	51-100	Moderate	People with asthma, respiratory infection, diabetes, lung or heart disease, or have had a stroke should limit outdoor activities or do activities that take less effort, such as walking instead of running.
3-5	101-150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Sensitive groups include people with heart or lung disease, asthma, diabetes, infants, children, adults older than 65, pregnant women, or who have had a stroke. These people should limit time spent outdoors.
1.5-3	151-200	Unhealthy	Everyone should limit time spent outdoors. Everyone should avoid exercising outdoors (including sports teams) and choose non-strenuous indoor activities. People with asthma, respiratory infection, diabetes, lung or heart disease, or have had a stroke should stay indoors. Infants, children, pregnant women and adults over age 65 should also stay indoors.
1-1.5	201-300	Very Unhealthy	Everyone should stay indoors, do only light activities, and keep windows closed if it is not too hot. Run air conditioners on re-circulate and close the outside air intake. Use indoor air cleaners with HEPA filters, if available. If you must be outdoors, wear an N-95 respirator mask. People with chronic

			diseases should check with their health care provider before wearing a mask. People with asthma, lung and heart disease, or have had a stroke should check with their healthcare provider for advice about leaving the area. Anyone with shortness of breath, wheezing, chest pain, heart palpitations, extreme fatigue, or difficulty moving or speaking should call their health care provider or call 911.
1 or less	301-500	Hazardous	Everyone should stay indoors, do only light activities, and keep windows closed if it is not too hot. See, “Very unhealthy above” and follow recommendations.

Printable version of the above air quality index attached.

Consultation

Jon Ness, Environmental Health Manager
509-766-7960 ext. 26

###