

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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TO: Grant County healthcare providers, infection control staff, supervisory nursing staff, clinic management, school nurses, school superintendents, Grant County Emergency Management, city leadership, Grant County Media

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## Air Quality Health Advisory

GRANT COUNTY, WA – The Grant County Health District has issued an air advisory as a result of wildfire smoke effecting the air quality in Grant County and across Washington State. The smoke is not expected to clear in the short-term, keeping the air quality between unhealthy for sensitive groups and unhealthy for all groups.

Poor air quality and inhaling wildfire smoke is unhealthy for all people 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 and may even make it into your blood stream. This makes it harder to breathe and may worsen other chronic health conditions.

To reduce the risks, Grant County Health District recommends the following:

- If it looks smoky outside, it is probably not a good time for any outdoor activities.
- Keep indoor air as clean as possible. Minimize the use of indoor air pollutants such as candles, incense, and wood burning stoves.
- Consider using HEPA filters (MERV-13 rating or higher) in your AC units (and settings “Recirculate” and “On” rather than “Auto”) or use high efficiency indoor air cleaner in one or more rooms.
- Routinely check on children, the elderly and friends and family who have breathing problems when outdoor air quality is unhealthy.
- Check local air quality reports. Listen and watch for news or health warnings about smoke.
- Know the difference between symptoms from smoke exposure and COVID-19 (a helpful link below).
- Follow the advice of your doctor or other healthcare provider about medicines and about your respiratory management plan if you have asthma or another lung disease.

An N95 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. For additional details on air quality index and recommended actions, use Table 1.

Avoid driving, when possible. If you must drive, keep the windows closed. Use the vehicle air conditioner and set filtration to recirculate. Most vehicles can recirculate the inside air which will help keep the smoky air out, however carbon dioxide levels can build up and cause sleepiness. You may have to shift from recirculating air to drawing in fresh air periodically. Smoke can also impact visibility.

Helpful websites:

- Washington’s Air Monitoring Network: <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/enwiwa/Default.htm>
- Wildfire Smoke and COVID-19 by the CDC: [https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/covid-19/wildfire\\_smoke\\_covid-19.html](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/covid-19/wildfire_smoke_covid-19.html)
- Washington Smoke Information: <http://wasmoke.blogspot.com>
- National Weather Service Western Region: [www.wrh.noaa.gov](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov)
- Washington State Dept of Health – Frequently Asked Questions about Smoke: [www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/AirQuality/OutdoorAir/SmokeFromFires/WildfireSmoke.aspx](http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/AirQuality/OutdoorAir/SmokeFromFires/WildfireSmoke.aspx)

**Table 1. Air Quality Index: its health effects and actions to take.**

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	<b>Everyone should limit time spent outdoors.</b> 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	<b>Everyone should stay indoors, do only light activities, and keep windows closed if it is not too hot.</b> Run air conditioners on re-circulate and close the outside air intake. Use indoor air cleaners with HEPA filters, if available. <b>If you must be outdoors, wear an N-95 respirator mask.</b> 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. <b>See, “Very unhealthy above” and follow recommendations.</b>