

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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TO: Grant Co schools, City leadership,  
Grant Co. Media.

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## Air Quality Health Advisory

GRANT COUNTY, WA – Grant County Health District (GCHD) is issuing the following Air Quality Health Advisory for all areas of Grant County. Air monitoring sites anticipate a further decline in air quality conditions in Grant County as wildfires in Washington and British Columbia continue to affect the region. Air quality is expected to remain in the “Moderate” to “Unhealthy” range into the weekend.

**Sensitive Groups** - Poor air quality and inhaling wildfire smoke is unhealthy for all people but can significantly impact high risk groups. High risk (sensitive) groups include people with asthma and other lung diseases, infants, older adults, pregnant women, and children and youth. Levels of pollutants that may not affect healthy people may cause breathing difficulties for these individuals.

**Smoke Exposure** - 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.

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

- Check air quality conditions daily. Follow health recommendations found on the Air Quality Index.
  - <http://wasmoke.blogspot.com>
- Keep indoor air as clean as possible. Minimize the use of indoor air pollutants such as candles, incense, and wood burning stoves.
- Consider using filters with a MERV-13 rating or higher. MERV-13 filters are best for filtering the particulates in wildfire smoke but may not be compatible with all HVAC systems. It is best to consult your systems manual or an HVAC professional before making changes.
  - Use “Recirculate” and “On” rather than “Auto” settings.
  - You can also use a HEPA portable indoor air cleaner in one or more rooms.
- Routinely check on children/youth, the elderly, and friends and family who have breathing problems when outdoor air quality is unhealthy for extended periods of time.
- Follow the advice of your doctor or other healthcare provider about medicines and your respiratory management plan if you have asthma or other illness affecting your lungs.



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 respirator use during periods of smoke, view DOH's [Wildfire Smoke and Masks](#) fact sheet.

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. You may have to shift from recirculating air to drawing in fresh air periodically. Smoke can also impact visibility.

For more recommendations and frequently asked questions visit Washington State Dept of Health's Smoke & Wildfires page: <https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/air-quality/smoke-fires>

**School Guidance** – Updated guidance for "Washington Children and Youth Activities for Air Quality" was released by DOH on June 30<sup>th</sup>. View the revised PDF, [click here](#).

**Table 1. Air Quality Index: Health Effects & 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>

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