



Renfrew County and District Health Unit
"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

For Immediate Release

(Pembroke, Ontario, 1:45 p.m., June 5, 2023)

Special Air Quality Statement

A special air quality statement has been issued for Renfrew County and District by Environment Canada. Smoke plumes from local forest fires as well as forest fires in Quebec have resulted in reduced visibility and deteriorating air quality.

Renfrew County and District Health Unit reminds residents that those at greater risk of health-related problems when exposed to wildfire smoke include older adults, pregnant people, infants and young children, people who work outdoors, people involved in strenuous outdoor exercise, and people with existing illness or chronic health conditions.

The best way to protect your health is to reduce your exposure to wildfire smoke.

If your community is threatened by an approaching wildfire, be prepared to evacuate at any time if directed by an authority issuing an evacuation.

To help limit your exposure to wildfire smoke:

- At-risk populations should reduce or reschedule outdoor activities for a time when conditions are better - children and older adults should take extra precautions. The general population should consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if experiencing symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.
- Keep windows and doors closed as long as the temperature is comfortable.
- Use recirculation settings on your HVAC system to prevent smoke from entering your home.
- Use a clean, good quality air filter in ventilation systems.
- Use an air purifier that uses HEPA filtration to remove smoke from your home.
- Visit community centres, libraries, and shopping malls, as these places often have cleaner filtered air and can provide a break from smoke.
- Drink plenty of water to help your body cope with the smoke.

Mild symptoms of smoke exposure can usually be managed without medical intervention, and include the following:

- Headaches
- A mild cough
- A runny nose
- Production of phlegm
- Eye, nose, and throat irritation

More serious symptoms include:

- Dizziness
- Chest pains
- Severe cough
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing (including asthma attacks)
- Heart palpitations (irregular heartbeat)

If you experience any of these symptoms, talk to your health care provider or seek medical attention immediately.

For additional tips on how to prevent health related illness from wildfire smoke, please visit [Wildfire smoke 101: Combined wildfire smoke and heat - Canada.ca](http://www.wildfire-smoke.com). To keep up-to-date on special air quality statements visit <https://bit.ly/2UNXx28>.

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