

Public Service Announcement



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For more information, contact:

Dale West, KYRHA, 235-5839

Linda Mikolayenko, MCRHR, 425-4812

Dr. James Irvine, Medical Health Officer, 425-8588

Forest fire smoke and your health

Along with the pleasant days of summer comes the risk of forest fires. Sometimes even with distant fires, or even fires in neighbouring provinces, we can have smoke conditions in our communities. Forest fire smoke can have an effect on our health, especially if we already have lung or heart problems.

If you notice smoke in the air, you are reminded to monitor your local radio station for forest fire updates. Especially for those who have lung or heart troubles, are elderly or very young, the following measures can be implemented:

- Remain indoors during times that there is smoke in the air;
- Keep doors and windows closed – if cooling is needed, use a fan or air-conditioning, if available;
- Reduce exercise and activity, especially outdoors;
- Avoid smoking and avoid exposure to second hand smoke;
- If you are on lung or heart medicine, always keep at least a 5-day supply on hand – get a refill of your prescription prior to running out of your medication;
- If you are experiencing increasing symptoms, more than irritation in the eyes, nose or throat, call the HealthLine at 1-877-800-0002, or see your local health worker.

If smoke becomes a significant problem, your local community may set up a site in the community that has access to air conditioning such as a school or community hall, so continue to listen to your local radio station for updates.

During any forest fire season in small northern communities, it is wise to be prepared in case fire becomes an immediate threat in your community – pack one change of clothing, personal toiletries, and health card for each family member to have 'at the ready', and be sure you are not running low on your medication.

For more health information on exposure to smoke, call the HealthLine at 1-877-800-0002.