

WILDFIRE SMOKE AND MASKS

Many public health officials and air quality districts agree... *the most effective way to protect yourself during wildfire emergencies is to stay indoors or limit your time outdoors* when there is smoke in the air. While wearing a mask (also called a respirator) may reduce your exposure to particulate, the health risks may outweigh the benefits.

Before wearing a mask, consider the following:

Masks require a perfect fit to be effective. If masks are not worn correctly, they provide little to no protection. Facial hair prevents a tight fit and reduces effectiveness.

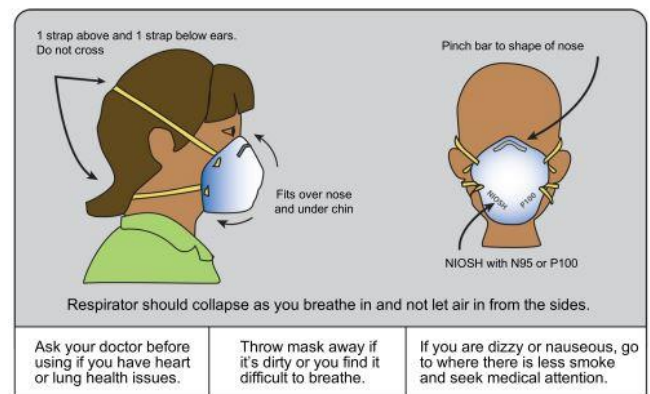
Masks are not recommended for children. Respirator masks do not typically come in suitable sizes for children. Since they would not fit well enough to provide a tight seal, they would not be effective at reducing exposure.

Masks may provide a false sense of security. Use of masks may encourage outdoor activity which could worsen exposure.

Masks can pose a health risk to some people. Masks may make breathing more difficult for people with lung or heart conditions or other respiratory issues. Masks can make it more difficult to breathe due to carbon dioxide build up, which reduces the intake of oxygen, and increases breathing rates and heart rates.

Masks are designed for “single use”. They are not intended for long-term use. Filter material may become dirty and saturated with particulate matter, possibly compromising the mask’s filtration effectiveness and making it harder to breathe.

If you choose to wear a mask, look for masks marked NIOSH with N95 or P100. Cloth, paper masks and tissues will NOT filter out wildfire smoke.



Protect Yourself from Wildfire Smoke

- Limit outdoor activity, even if you’re healthy.
- Stay indoors with the windows and doors closed as much as possible.
- Run your air conditioner.
- Do not run a swamp cooler or whole house fan as they will bring in smoke from outside.
- Do not smoke, vacuum, fry food, burn candles or do other things that will create indoor air pollution.
- Use a CARB-certified portable air purifier with a HEPA filter. Recommendations can be found at www.arb.ca.gov.
- Pay attention to local air quality reports. Go to www.ysaqmd.org.
- Temporarily leave the area.