

Wildfire Smoke and Outdoor Exercise

Exercising outdoors is a healthy summertime activity for most people, but it should be done with caution under smoky conditions.

Exercise is good for physical and mental health

However, some people are at higher risk of experiencing health effects while exercising when it is smoky outside:

- People with conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or respiratory infections.
- People with other chronic health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes.
- Pregnant women.
- Children.
- The elderly.

Children may be especially susceptible to wildfire smoke.

- Although children have smaller lungs than adults, they breathe more air per unit of body weight.
- The lungs of children are not fully developed. Their sensitive tissues continue to branch and grow into late adolescence.
- Children are generally more active than adults especially outdoors.

People breathe more quickly and more deeply while they are exercising

- The average adult breathes about 7litres of air per minute (L/min) when resting. This increases steadily with more intense exercise.
- **An adult doing strenuous exercise breathes at least 10 times more air than an adult who is resting.** The same principle applies for children.

Exercising can drastically increase your wildfire smoke exposure.

- The fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) in wildfire smoke can be inhaled deep into the lungs.
- If possible, choosing a cleaner indoor environment can significantly reduce the amount of PM_{2.5} inhaled.



If you exercise outdoors during smoky conditions, following some simple guidelines can help to reduce the impacts of wildfire smoke.

- **Choose lower-intensity activities.**
- Reduce the amount of time you spend exercising.
- **Drink plenty of water** before, during and after exercise.
- **Listen to your body.** If you are experiencing symptoms, stop exercising or reduce the intensity.
- Allow everyone to gauge their own signs and symptoms, and to make their own decisions about how to participate.
- **Look out for others**, especially children and the elderly.
- Use weather forecasts, smoke forecasts, and your senses to help you decide on the best times to go outdoors.
- Consider cancelling or modifying group sporting events, and be aware of participants who may be more susceptible to smoke.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://yukon.ca/en/wildfire-smoke>



BC Centre for Disease Control

