

July 3, 2015

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Precautionary air quality advisory issued by Alberta Health Services

CALGARY – Due to smoky conditions caused by wildfires in Northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories, Alberta Health Services (AHS) is issuing a precautionary air quality advisory for the province. Air quality conditions are forecast to worsen over the weekend.

This air quality advisory is in addition to the precautionary air quality advisories [issued May 26](#) for the entire North and Edmonton Zone, which remain in place, as well as the advisory [issued June 30](#) for the Red Deer area, and the advisory [issued July 2](#) for northwestern Alberta communities. All advisories remain in place.

Individuals living in or visiting the province are advised to be aware of potential health concerns that can be associated with smoky air conditions that are forecast. In smoky conditions, even healthy individuals may experience temporary irritation of eyes and throat, and possibly shortness of breath.

To reduce exposure to smoky air conditions when they are present, all individuals can:

- Reduce presence of smoke in indoor environments:
 - Close and lock all outside windows and doors, including attached garage doors
 - Turn down furnace thermostats and furnace fans to the minimum setting. Do not attempt to extinguish pilot light.
 - If you have an air-conditioner, keep the fresh-air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent outdoor smoke from getting inside.
 - Avoid running fans, such as “whole-house fans” or “fresh air ventilation systems”, that bring more smoky outdoor air inside.
 - Switch all floor registers to closed position
 - Close fire place dampers on wood burning fireplaces.
 - Do not use wood burning fireplace, wood stoves or other smoke-producing appliances or features, including candles.
- If you must drive to another location, keep windows and vents closed. Run your car fans on re-circulate mode to avoid drawing in outdoor air.
- Reduce levels of physical activity, as necessary, to decrease the inhalation of airborne pollutants.
- Do not smoke tobacco – smoking puts added stress on your lungs and those around you.

Individuals with respiratory conditions (such as COPD and asthma), and individuals with existing cardiovascular conditions (such as angina, previous heart attack and congestive heart failure), may notice a worsening of symptoms, due to the current air conditions. These individuals should monitor for worsening of symptoms and take the precautions routinely recommended by their physicians if a worsening of symptoms occurs. Children and elderly are also at higher risk of smoke-related illness.

Individuals experiencing symptoms can also call Health Link at 811 to speak to a registered nurse.

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Air quality can vary with weather conditions and prevailing winds. Because air quality is expected to be variable, this advisory will remain in effect until further notice.

Information about the air quality in many areas of Alberta is updated regularly on the Alberta Parks Website at: <http://esrd.alberta.ca/air/programs-and-services/air-quality-health-index/default.aspx>. Air quality information is also available by phone, toll-free, at 1-877-247-7333.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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