

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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Forest Fire Smoke Impacting Air Quality

Smoke from forest fires in western Canada may affect some communities in northwestern Ontario in the upcoming days. Breathing in the smoky air can be harmful to health and may cause coughing, throat irritation, headaches, and difficulty breathing.

Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) advises people to limit their exposure to the smoke - especially children, people who are elderly or pregnant, those with lung conditions, and anyone who does outdoor physically demanding work.

Follow these tips to protect you and your family:

- If it looks smoky outside, stay inside as much as possible with your windows and doors closed.
- Avoid using items that 'burn' such as wood and gas stoves, incense and candles, or frying foods.
- Avoid smoking or vaping to limit the number of harmful particles in your lungs and in the air around you.
- If you are in your car or truck, keep the windows closed and put the air system on 'recirculate'.
- If you have an air conditioner, set it to 'recirculate' and keep it running to help filter and cool the air.
- Anyone with asthma should use their medication as prescribed. Call a health care provider if your symptoms worsen.
- If you have air cleaners with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters, turn them on.
- If you have an HVAC system in your home, use the highest rated MECV filter rated for your system and set your fan to recirculate.

For more information, contact your local health unit office to speak with a public health inspector.

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