

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA DURING PERIODS OF HEAVY SMOKE

People with asthma are susceptible to bushfire smoke, however there are strategies you can use to minimise smoke exposure

How?



Stay Indoors

- Avoid outdoor activity to reduce exposure to bushfire smoke
- Close all windows and doors and use the air-conditioner on recycled air - if available
- Avoid indoor sources of air pollution like candles, woodfire, incense sticks and cigarettes
- Work from home where able
- Use telehealth where available
- Partake indoor exercise during periods of heavy smoke

- P2/N95 rated face masks can help to filter out the particulates in bushfire smoke
- Masks must be fitted well and maintain a tight seal to be effective
- Cloth, surgical masks and bandanas do not filter out smoke particles
- People with asthma who are required to work outside or cannot avoid exposure to bushfire smoke should wear a face mask (P2/N95)
- Masks can make breathing more difficult and increase thermal discomfort- check with you healthcare professional before wearing a mask

Face Masks



Air Quality

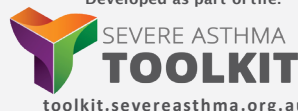
- People with asthma should be encouraged to check local air quality information and public health messages
- Using apps, such as AirRater provides access real time air quality

Air Quality Index & Indicator		What does it mean?*
0-33	Very Good	Enjoy normal activities
34-66	Good	Enjoy normal activities
67-99	Fair	People unusually sensitive to air pollution should reduce or reschedule strenuous outdoor activities
100-149	Poor	Sensitive groups should reduce or reschedule outdoor activities
150-199	Very Poor	Sensitive groups should avoid strenuous outdoor activities
200+	Hazardous	Sensitive groups should avoid all outdoor activities

*Adapted from NSW Health

References: Carlsten et al. Personal strategies to minimise effects of air pollution on respiratory health: advice for providers, patients and the public. *Eur Respir J.* 2020;55(6); Cherrie et al. Effectiveness of face masks used to protect Beijing residents against particulate air pollution. *Occup. Environ Med.* 2018;75(6):446-52; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Non-occupational uses of respiratory protection – what public health organizations and users need to know. Shakya et al. Evaluating the efficacy of cloth facemasks in reducing particulate matter exposure. *J Expo Sci Environ Epidemiol.* 2017;27(3):352-7; US Food and Drug Administration. N95 Respirators, Surgical Masks, and Face Masks. Vardoulakis et al. Bushfire smoke: urgent need for a national health protection strategy. *Med J Aust.* 2020;212(8):349-53.e1

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