



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY: Facts About Mask Protection

October 13, 2017

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Northern California Fires Affecting Marin Air Quality:

The fires in Northern California are impacting air quality across the region. The best way to protect yourself from health effects of wildfire smoke is to limit your exposure.

Will a face mask protect me from wild fire smoke?

- The following **do not** protect your lungs from wildfire smoke:
 - Bandanas or towels (wet or dry) or tissue held over the mouth and nose: this may relieve dryness but won't protect your lungs from wildfire smoke
 - One-strap paper dust mask or a surgical mask that hooks around your ears: these don't protect against the fine particles in smoke
 - For those who cannot avoid prolonged activities outdoors "Particulate respirator" masks (respirator masks) labeled N95 or N100 may provide **some protection**: they filter out fine particles but not hazardous gases
 - The respirator masks do not seal well on people with facial hair or beards
 - Individuals with respiratory conditions should consult their doctor before using a mask— masks may limit air flow and make it more difficult to breathe.
 - **Respirator masks should not be used on young children**: they don't seal well enough to provide protection

What can I do to protect myself?

Limiting exposure to wildfire smoke by remaining indoors is the primary goal. Depending on your situation, a combination of the strategies below may work best and give you the most protection from wildfire smoke.

- Keep indoor air as clean as possible. Keep windows and doors closed.
- Use a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter to reduce indoor air pollution.
 - Avoid smoking tobacco, using wood-burning stoves or fireplaces, burning candles, incenses or vacuuming.
 - Minimize the amount of time spent outdoors as much as possible. Avoid vigorous outdoor activities.
 - Drink plenty of water
 - Listen to your body and contact your healthcare provider or call 911 if you experience difficulty breathing, chest pain, severe fatigue, dizziness, or worsening of asthma or chronic respiratory illness

- For those who wish to use an N-95 mask, these may be available at hardware stores or from online retailers

As always, if you or someone you know is experiencing an emergency, call 9-1-1.

Follow @MarinHHS or MarinHHS.org for updates

For up to date information about fires in California go to:

<http://www.calfire.ca.gov/>

For up to date information about air quality in the Bay Area go to:

<http://www.baaqmd.gov/>