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**JOINT PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WILDFIRE SMOKE ALERT FOR THE PUGET SOUND REGION**

This is a wildfire smoke alert from the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency and the local public health agencies of King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. Air pollution is increasing due to wildfire smoke and may cause health problems.

Wildfire smoke is expected to impact air quality in the Puget Sound region over the weekend, with higher impacts expected in King and Snohomish Counties. The air quality is likely to reach MODERATE or UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS on Saturday, with worsening smoke on Sunday that could reach UNHEALTHY or worse at times. We are expecting westerly surface winds on late Monday/early Tuesday which will help with clearing out the smoke.

Wildfire smoke can cause and worsen many health problems:

* Asthma attack
* Chest pain
* Coughing
* Fast heartbeat
* Headaches
* Irritated sinuses
* Stinging eyes
* Trouble breathing

Wildfire smoke can severely affect the respiratory and cardiovascular systems and increase health risks, especially for sensitive populations.

Everyone should take precautions, especially infants, children, and people over 65, or those who are pregnant, have heart or lung diseases (such as asthma or COPD), respiratory infections, diabetes, or are stroke survivors:

* Stay at home when possible. If you can’t stay cool at home or are especially sensitive to smoke, it may be best to seek shelter elsewhere.
* Limit your activity outdoors, such as running, bicycling, physical labor, sports, or hobbies.
* If possible, close windows in your home to keep the indoor air clean. If you have an air conditioner, use it in recirculation mode.
	+ Make sure your home ventilation system is maintained following manufacturer recommendations (like replacing filters regularly). Don’t contribute to indoor air pollution such as burning candles or vacuuming. Use a [portable air cleaner](https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/AirQuality/SmokeFromFires#q8) if available.
* If you do not have an air conditioner, consider finding a public place with clean, air-conditioned indoor air like a mall, public library, or community center. Call ahead to make sure they have air conditioning.
* Heat [can be dangerous](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/BePreparedBeSafe/SevereWeatherandNaturalDisasters/HotWeatherSafety) too. If it becomes unbearably hot, it’s better to open the windows for a short period of time.
* Schools, camps, sports teams, and daycare providers should consider postponing outdoor activities or moving them indoors. [More information here](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/334-332.pdf).
* Masks with the label “N95” or “N100” are the most effective type of mask that protects you from air pollution. Any mask or face covering should be used if you have no other way to avoid wildfire smoke. Please check with your doctor to see if this appropriate for you. [More information here](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/334-353.pdf).
	+ Other face coverings, such as surgical or cloth masks, are not recommended because they offer limited protection from air pollution and wildfire smoke.
* People respond to smoke in different ways and at different levels. Pay attention to symptoms that you or those you are caring for are experiencing and take the above steps to reduce exposures at lower smoke levels if needed.
* Check with your health care provider for more specific health questions and concerns. As always, seek medical attention if symptoms are serious.

For more information on ways to reduce your exposure to smoke, see the Washington Department of Health’s [Smoke From Fire tips](http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/AirQuality/SmokeFromFires).

Air quality conditions may change quickly. Check the air quality forecast regularly at the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency’s [website](http://www.pscleanair.org/).