



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –
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Health Advisory for Wildfire Smoke, Extreme Heat

FAYETTEVILLE, NC - The Cumberland County Department of Public Health reminds everyone to use caution while wildfire smoke is in the air and during the extreme heat of summer. According to the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, wildfire smoke's greatest health threat is to those with heart and lung conditions, older adults and children. However, wildfire smoke can potentially cause health problems for anyone. Limit your time outside during these circumstances and decrease outdoor activities involving heavy exertion.

The National Weather Service has issued a heat advisory today for Cumberland County with temperatures expected to reach 100 degrees. The Department of Social Services, at 1225 Ramsey St., has opened an auxiliary lobby for people seeking a way to escape the oppressive heat. The lobby areas are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday throughout the summer when a heat advisory is issued or the heat index reaches 100.

The following precautions are from the Centers for Disease Control to decrease your risk from wildfire smoke.

- **Check local air quality reports.** Listen and watch for news or health warnings about smoke. The state issued a Code Orange Air Quality Action Day alert for today, which means air quality is unhealthy for sensitive groups, including children, active adults, and people with heart or respiratory disease. Minimize time outdoors.
- **Follow the advice of your doctor or other healthcare provider** about medicines and about your respiratory management plan if you have asthma or another lung disease. Consider evacuating the area if you are having trouble breathing. Call for further advice if your symptoms worsen.
- **Keep indoor air as clean as possible** if you are advised to stay indoors. Keep windows and doors closed. Run an air conditioner if you have one, but keep the fresh-air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent outdoor smoke from getting inside. If you do not have an air conditioner and it is too warm to stay inside with the windows closed, seek shelter in a designated evacuation center or away from the affected area.
- **Avoid activities that increase indoor pollution.** Burning candles, fireplaces, or gas stoves can increase indoor pollution. Vacuuming stirs up particles already inside your home, contributing to indoor pollution. Smoking also puts even more pollution into the air.
- **Do not rely on dust masks for protection.** Paper "comfort" or "dust" masks commonly found at hardware stores are designed to trap large particles, such as sawdust. These masks will not protect your lungs from the small particles found in wildfire smoke.
- **Evacuate from the path of wildfires.** Listen to the news to learn about current evacuation orders. Follow the instructions of local officials about when and where to evacuate. Take only essential items with you. Follow designated evacuation routes—others may be blocked—and expect heavy traffic.

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Health Tips for the High Temperatures

The Department of Public Health advises the community to be cautious during the high temperatures. Prolonged exposure to high temperatures can cause injury and death to residents and their pets, especially children and the elderly. Take time to check on elderly neighbors, family, and friends without air conditioning. Make sure that they are protected and have plenty of fluids.

Make sure to keep children well hydrated with water and juice. Limit outdoor activities, especially during the heat of the day. Playground equipment can cause burns in high temperatures, so be sure to check playground equipment before allowing children to play. Children should never be left alone in a parked car. Cars can heat up to 120° F in as little as 10 minutes.

Be aware of stages of heat-related illnesses:

- **Heat Cramps:** Muscle pain and cramps due to lack of water, which is an early sign that the body is having trouble with the heat.
- **Heat Exhaustion:** The body loses a significant amount of fluid, which can result in mild shock. Look for these signs and symptoms:
 - Cool, moist, pale, flushed or red skin (the skin may be red right after physical activity)
 - Heavy sweating
 - Headache
 - Dizziness and weakness or exhaustion
 - Nausea
- **Heat Stroke:** This is a life-threatening condition and requires immediate medical attention. Look for these signs and symptoms:
 - Vomiting
 - Decreased alertness or complete loss of consciousness
 - High body temperature (sometimes as high as 105° F)
 - Dry, red, hot skin
 - Rapid, weak pulse
 - Rapid, shallow breathing

Here are some tips for staying safe in the heat:

- Stay indoors as much as possible and limit exposure to the sun.
- Stay on the lowest floor out of the sunshine if air conditioning is not available.
- Consider spending the warmest part of the day in public buildings such as libraries, schools, movie theaters, shopping malls, and other community facilities.
- Eat well-balanced, light, and regular meals.
- Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Limit intake of alcoholic beverages.
- Dress in loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothes that cover as much skin as possible.
- Protect face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat.
- Use sunscreen.
- Avoid strenuous work during the warmest part of the day. Use a buddy system when working in extreme heat, and take frequent breaks.

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