Take Steps to Protect Yourself from Wildfire Smoke

Lincoln County, Oregon — Lincoln County Public Health is offering easy ways for you to recognize and protect yourself from poor air quality. Smoke from wildfires can reduce air quality and harm health. Lincoln County currently has very unhealthy or hazardous air quality. Stay inside if at all possible.

"Wildfire smoke contains fine particles. When the particles in the air are concentrated, the air quality decreases. When people breathe this air, it can make them sick. People at the highest risk of illness are those with chronic lung or heart conditions, the elderly and children," said Rebecca Austen, Health Department Director. "People who have asthma or other lung conditions should follow their breathing management plans. They should keep medications available and contact their healthcare provider if necessary."

Lincoln County Public Health suggests people take the following steps to avoid breathing problems or other symptoms when wildfire smoke is present:

- Be aware of the level of smoke in your area. Avoid areas with highest concentrations.
- Check the current air quality for your area on Oregon Smoke blog at http://oregonsmoke.blogspot.com/ or call 2-1-1. Avoid outdoor activities when air quality is unhealthy and hazardous.
- Avoid smoke by staying indoors when smoke is thickest. If you stay indoors, close as many windows and doors as possible. However, don’t let your home overheat. Use a filter in your heating and cooling system that removes fine particles.
- People with heart or lung disease, the elderly and children are more sensitive to serious health effects from wildfire smoke. If smoke is thick for a short time, people in these sensitive groups can stay indoors. If possible, they can use an air filter to clean harmful particles from the air. If smoke is likely to last for more than two
days, leaving the area until the smoke clears is the best way to avoid health problems from smoke.

- Avoid strenuous outdoor activity when smoke is heavy. Young children, the elderly, and people with heart or lung problems are especially vulnerable.

Go to the Oregon Smoke blog at http://oregonsmoke.blogspot.com/ for the latest on fires across the state.

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