

STATE OF COLORADO

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Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

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Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

Wildfire Recovery Guidance for Respiratory Health

Find health recommendations from National Jewish Health at

<http://www.nationaljewish.org/about/mediacenter/pressreleases/2012/wildfire-smoke/> .

- As much as possible, avoid getting ash into the air. Do not use leaf blowers or take other actions that will put ash into the air.
- Shop vacuums and other common vacuum cleaners do not filter out small particles, but rather blow such particles out the exhaust into the air where they can be breathed.
- The use of shop vacuums and other non-HEPA filter vacuums is not recommended. HEPA filter vacuums could be used, if available.
- Well-fitting dust masks may provide some protection during cleanup. A mask rated N-95 or P-100 will be more effective than simpler dust or surgical masks in blocking particles from ash. In general, many ash particles are larger than those found in smoke; thus, wearing a dust mask can significantly reduce (but not completely eliminate) the number of particles inhaled.
- People with heart or lung disease should consult their physician before using a mask during post-fire cleanup.
- Gentle sweeping of indoor and outdoor hard surfaces followed by wet mopping is the best procedure in most cases. A damp cloth or wet mop may be all that is needed on lightly dusted areas.
- Children are more likely to be affected by health threats from smoke because their airways are still developing and because they breathe more air per pound of body weight than adults. Children also are more likely to be active outdoors.
- Pay attention to local air quality reports. Listen and watch for news or health warnings about smoke. Also pay attention to public health messages about taking additional safety measures. Refer to visibility guides if they are available.
- If you are advised to stay indoors, keep indoor air as clean as possible. Keep windows and doors temporarily closed unless it is extremely hot outside. Run an air conditioner if you have one, but keep the fresh-air intake temporarily 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 elsewhere.
- Do not add to indoor pollution. When smoke levels are high, do not use anything that burns, such as candles, fireplaces or gas stoves. Do not vacuum, because vacuuming stirs up particles already inside your home. Do not smoke, because smoking puts even more pollution into the air.

Find more information on smoke conditions from the Air Pollution Control Division at

<http://www.colorado.gov/airquality/addendum.aspx#smoke> .