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| <p>IN THIS ISSUE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Special Air Quality Statement Issued for Peel Region by Environment and Climate Change Canada | <p>FROM:</p> <p>Nicholas Brandon, MD, MA, MSc, CCFP, FRCPC Acting Medical Officer of Health</p> |
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| <p>Key Messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High levels of air pollution have developed due to smoke from forest fires in Quebec and Northeastern Ontario. ▪ Physician and hospital visits may increase as a result of poor air quality, including after the event has ended. |
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impacts associated with poor air quality may be felt several days after the poor air quality event. There is often a lag between the air quality event and the onset of symptoms. Increased visits to health professionals should be expected into the next week.

Recommended Actions for the Public:

Special Air Quality Statement Issued for Peel Region by Environment and Climate Change Canada

High levels of air pollution have developed due to smoke from forest fires in Quebec and Northeastern Ontario. Poor air quality will persist into the weekend. Air quality and visibility due to wildfire smoke can fluctuate over short distances and can vary considerably from hour to hour. Wildfire smoke can be harmful to everyone’s health even at low concentrations.

Individuals at higher risk of experiencing health effects caused by wildfire smoke:

- People with respiratory disease or heart disease
- older adults
- children
- pregnant individuals
- people who work outdoors

Symptoms may include:

- shortness of breath
- wheezing (including asthma attacks)
- severe cough
- dizziness
- chest pain

There may be increased physician or hospital visits as a result of the high levels of air pollution. The health

- Check the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI): https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/provincial_summary/on_e.html and monitor for symptoms.
- Stop or reduce activity level if breathing becomes uncomfortable or if you feel unwell.
- If you have an HVAC system in your home, use the highest rated MERV: <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/what-merv-rating> filter for your system (ideally rated 13 or higher) and set the fan to recirculate air constantly. You can also use a portable High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) air cleaner. Keep your doors and windows closed if the temperature in your home is comfortable. Don’t use an air purifier that generates ozone.
- Take a break from the smoke at a location in your community where you can find clean, cool air.
- If you must spend time outdoors, a well-fitted respirator type mask (such as a NIOSH certified N95 or equivalent respirator) can help reduce your exposure to the fine particles in smoke. However, respirators do not reduce exposure to the gases in wildfire smoke.
- Reduce sources of indoor air pollution. If you can, avoid smoking or vaping indoors, burning incense and candles, frying foods, using wood stoves and vacuuming. Dust on indoor surfaces can be removed by wiping and wet mopping during a pollution episode.

Useful Resources:

- Visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/air-quality-health-index.html> for information on current and forecast AQHI values.
- If individuals experience any feelings of stress, anxiety, or depression, they can contact their mental health care provider for advice or visit: <https://www.wellnesstogether.ca/en-CA>.
- For more details on wildfire smoke, visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/air-quality-health-index/wildfire-smoke.htm>.