Protect Your Lungs from Wildfire Smoke

N95 respirators can help protect your lungs from wildfire smoke. Straps must go above and below the ears.

A one-strap paper mask will NOT protect your lungs from wildfire smoke.

A surgical mask will NOT protect your lungs from wildfire smoke.

Wildfire smoke can irritate your eyes, nose, throat and lungs. It can make you cough and wheeze, and can make it hard to breathe. If you have asthma or another lung disease, or heart disease, inhaling wildfire smoke can be especially harmful.

If you cannot **leave** the smoky area, good ways to protect your lungs from wildfire smoke include staying indoors and reducing physical activity. Wearing a special mask called a "**particulate respirator**" can also help protect your lungs from wildfire smoke.

How to Choose the Correct Mask to Protect Your Lungs

- Choose a mask called a "**particulate respirator**" that has the word "**NIOSH**" and either "**N95**" or "**P100**" printed on it. These are sold at many hardware and home repair stores and pharmacies.
- Choose a mask that has **two straps** that go around your head. **DO NOT** choose a mask with only one strap or with straps that just hook over the ears.
- Choose a size that will fit over your nose and under your chin. It should seal tightly to your face. These masks do not come in sizes that fit young children.
- Do not use bandanas (wet or dry), paper or surgical masks, or tissues held over the mouth and nose. These will not protect your lungs from wildfire smoke.

How to Use a Mask

- Place the mask over your nose and under your chin, with one strap placed below the ears and one strap above.
- Pinch the metal part of the mask tightly over the top of your nose.
- The mask fits best on clean shaven skin.
- Throw out your mask when it gets harder to breathe through, or if the inside gets dirty. Use a new mask each day if you can.
- It is harder to breathe through a mask, so take breaks often if you work outside.
- If you feel dizzy or nauseated, go to a less smoky area, take off your mask and get medical help.
- If you have a heart or lung problem, ask your doctor before using a mask.

For more information about protecting yourself from wildfire smoke, call your local health department.

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