



FOR RELEASE
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Health effects from forest fire smoke

WHITEHORSE—As smoke from several wildfires in Yukon has penetrated most Yukon communities, Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Brendan Hanley, would like to remind Yukoners with asthma or lung or heart conditions to take special care to protect themselves from the hazards of smoke exposure.

Smoke from forest fires can provoke minor symptoms such as a runny nose and itchy eyes, irritated throat and sinuses, headaches or coughing. Individuals with asthma or chronic conditions can have more serious reactions. Infants and the elderly are also more sensitive to the effects of smoke.

"Smoke can worsen a breathing condition," Hanley says. "Stay inside with the windows closed when heavy smoke is present. Try to limit your physical activities and make sure you have your medications on hand. This is also a really good time to make an action plan with your family physician or community nurse, which would include when to increase or add to medications, and when to seek medical care.

People with allergies or sensitivity to smoke should also stay indoors and limit exertion.

Most Yukoners will experience minimal effects from breathing in the smoke. Anyone with concerns can call the Yukon Health Line at 811, or contact their health care provider or community health centre.

- 30 -

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