



## Government of Yukon

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# HEALTHalert

FOR RELEASE #09-180  
 August 3, 2009

### Yukoners are Reminded of Health Effects from Forest Fire Smoke

WHITEHORSE – Yukon Medical Officer of Health (MOH) Dr. Brendan Hanley reminds Yukoners that smoke from forest fires can pose a health risk to those with asthma or other respiratory conditions.

For most individuals forest fire smoke is merely an irritant and can cause a scratchy throat, cough, irritated sinuses, headaches, runny nose and stinging eyes. However, for some individuals with asthma, or chronic lung conditions, smoke from forest fires can become a more serious health concern.

"People with respiratory conditions are reminded to stay inside their house with the windows closed and reduce unnecessary physical activity," Hanley said. "They should also ensure they have their medication available and take it as prescribed."

Hanley also offers the following messages to Yukoners:

- Those people with respiratory conditions, such as asthma or chronic lung disease should stay indoors and limit exertion.
- Those people with allergies or sensitivity to smoke should also limit exertion and consider reducing time outdoors.
- Those people that do not have asthma, lung disease or allergies, should not have adverse health effects from being outdoors; however, they may find that their eyes, nose and throat feel irritated from the smoke. Each person will have their own individual response, and should limit their time outdoors and minimize strenuous activity if necessary.

If you have questions about your health due to forest fire smoke, call the Yukon HealthLine at 811 or speak to your health care provider (your doctor or a nurse at your community health centre). You can also find information on the Health and Social Services website at: [www.hss.gov.yk.ca](http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca).

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