

### **Staying Safe During Wildfire Smoke Season**

When wildfires happen, the smoke can travel far and make the air unhealthy, even if the fire itself is thousands of kilometres away. For people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), wildfire smoke can be especially hard to cope with. It can trigger headaches, breathing problems, fatigue, or other severe symptoms.

Staying indoors helps, but it's not always enough. Here are some ways to keep the air inside your home as clean and safe as possible:

#### **Use a cold, damp cloth to breathe through**

If you start to feel the effects of smoke inside your home, wet a clean cloth with cold water, wring it out, and gently cover your nose and mouth. Breathing through the fabric can reduce the amount of smoke and particles you take in.

#### **Wear a mask indoors if needed**

If smoke is entering your indoor space and you are sensitive, wearing a well-fitting, non-toxic mask indoors can reduce exposure. N95 masks are often recommended, but always choose ones that are free from chemical smells.

#### **Avoid using kitchen and bathroom fans**

Stove hoods and bathroom fans pull outside air in, and that can bring smoke indoors. Instead, use a portable fan that recirculates the air in your space.

#### **Seal off drafts and gaps**

Place damp cloths, towels, or weather stripping along the bottom of doors and around windows to keep smoke from leaking in. Avoid using chemical-based sealants if you have MCS.



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### **Keep windows and doors closed**

Even if it feels stuffy, resist the urge to open windows during wildfire smoke events. Openings can quickly bring in irritants and odours that linger.

### **Use an air purifier with a HEPA filter**

If possible, use an air purifier that has a HEPA filter (and no added chemicals such as scents). These can help remove fine smoke particles from the air. Keep it in the room where you spend most of your time. Remember to wash or replace the filters regularly using fragrance-free, least-toxic soap and water if they're reusable.

### **Stock up before wildfire season**

Have extra filters, masks, and supplies on hand so you don't have to leave home when air quality is poor. Try to prepare before the season starts to avoid exposure.

### **Avoid toxic chemical cleaners or scented products**

Your body could be under stress from exposure to smoke. To avoid additional triggers, choose fragrance-free, least-toxic products, including sprays, or chemical cleaners. Depend on certified eco-labels for healthy products, and always read labels.

### **Choose natural ways to stay cool**

To stay cool in summer, try using a portable fan or placing a bowl of ice in front of a fan. Avoid running air conditioners or fans that may draw air from outside unless they have proper filters and are regularly cleaned.

### **Take care of your air, and your health**

Wildfire season is stressful, but with a few careful steps, you can make your home a safer, more breathable space. If you know others with MCS, share these tips to help everyone stay informed and protected.