



Patient Handout: Climate Events and COPD Exacerbations

Climate events	Risks	What I can do
 <p>Wildfire</p>	<p>People with COPD need to be careful when there's wildfire smoke or when the air quality suddenly gets worse. Here's why:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It makes them more likely to get pneumonia, which is a lung infection. • It can cause their COPD to suddenly get much worse, leading to more breathing problems (COPD exacerbation). • They might have to go to the emergency room more often. • They might have to stay in the hospital. • In some cases, it can even be life-threatening. 	<p>To stay safe during bad air quality days, I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign up for the BC Air Quality Index to get alerts on my phone or email when the air is going to get worse. • Stay indoors and use air conditioning if I have it. • Keep the windows in my home and car closed. • Make sure the fireplace damper is closed. • Use portable air filters with HEPA or carbon filters to reduce my risk of breathing problems. • Plan ahead by having my action plan and rescue medications ready. I should also pack extra inhalers and medications if I live in an area with wildfires."
 <p>Extreme Heat</p>	<p>When there are really hot days ("heat waves"), people with COPD have a higher risk of dying. If there's a heat wave along with bad air quality, it makes the risk of dying even higher.</p>	

Air Quality and Wildfire Resources

- **Gov.bc.ca:**
 - o [Current Wildfire Activity](#)
 - o [Air Quality Health Index](#)
 - o [Air Quality Subscription Service](#)
 - o [Wildfire Smoke: Frequently Asked Questions \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)
- **BC CDC:**
 - o [Wildfire Smoke Response Planning \(bccdc.ca\)](#)
- **Videos:**
 - o [BCCDC: What kind of mask protects you from smoke?](#)
 - o [BCCDC: Protect your health from wildfire smoke](#)