

# Air Quality Public Health Advisory

Whitman County Public Health has issued an air advisory as a result of wildfires and recent poor air quality in the Palouse and Lewiston/Clarkston area.

Poor air quality and wildfire smoke can impact people with asthma and other lung diseases, as well as children and older adults. Levels of pollutants that may not affect healthy people may cause breathing difficulties for these people.

## **To reduce the risks to vulnerable individuals, Whitman County Public Health recommends the following:**

- If it looks smoky outside, it is probably not a good time for outdoor activities.
- Minimize the use of indoor air pollutants such as candles, incense, and wood burning stoves.
- Routinely check on children, the elderly and friends and family who have breathing problems when outdoor air quality is unhealthy.

## **Helpful web sites**

- University of Washington Fire, Smoke and Health Website:  
<http://depts.washington.edu/wildfire>
- National Weather Service Western Region:  
[www.wrh.noaa.gov](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov)
- Satellite Images of Fires:  
[www.osei.noaa.gov/Events/Fires/US\\_Northwest/](http://www.osei.noaa.gov/Events/Fires/US_Northwest/)
- Washington State Department of Ecology  
<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/enviwa/Default.htm>
- Washington State Department of Health  
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/AirQuality/OutdoorAir/SmokeFromFires.aspx>

## **To protect you family, make personal observations to determine outdoor air quality.**

- ✓ Face away from the sun.
- ✓ Determine the limit of your visibility range by looking at targets at known distances (miles).
- ✓ The visible range is the point at which even high-contrast objects (e.g. a dark forested mountain viewed against the sky at noon) totally disappear.
- ✓ After determining visibility in miles, use the table to the left to identify potential health effects and appropriate cautionary activities.

| <b>Visibility in Miles</b> | <b>Air Quality Index</b> | <b>Health Category</b>         | <b>Health Effects</b>   |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 10 or more                 | 0-50                     | Good                           | None  |
| 5-10                       | 51-100                   | Moderate                       | Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion.  |
| 3-5                        | 101-150                  | Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups | People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.  |
| 1.5-3                      | 151-200                  | Unhealthy                      | People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.        |
| 1-1.5                      | 201-300                  | Very Unhealthy                 | People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid all physical activity outdoors. Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion.      |
| 1 or less                  | 301-500                  | Hazardous                      | Everyone should avoid all physical activity outdoors; people with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should remain indoors and keep activity levels low. |