

WHITMAN COUNTY
Department of Public Health

CENTRAL OFFICE

310 N. MAIN STREET
COLFAX, WASHINGTON 99111
PHONE (509) 397-6280
FAX (509) 397-6239

PULLMAN BRANCH OFFICE

1205 SE PROFESSIONAL MALL BLVD STE # 203
PULLMAN, WASHINGTON 99163
PHONE (509) 332-6752
FAX (509) 334-4517

For Immediate Release: 9/14/2012

Poor air quality from area wildfires leads to recommendation to curb outdoor activities

September 14, 2012

Wildfire smoke has settled around the Palouse and the Lewiston/Clarkston areas, leading public officials to recommend postponing outdoor school activities, including football. The recommendation was made because exposure to outdoor air pollutants could cause difficulty breathing for young people taking part in physical activities. Air pollution from the smoke can cause health problems for anyone, and can be especially hard on area residents at higher risk of sensitivity.

Whitman County Public Health and the Washington State Department of Health recommend that higher risk residents (infants and children, adults 65 and older, pregnant women, diabetics, cigarette smokers, and those with pre-existing lung or cardiovascular illnesses) limit time spent outdoors, especially when exercising. Air pollution can trigger asthma attacks, cause difficulty breathing, and make lung and heart problems worse.

People with lung or heart conditions may experience symptoms earlier than people who don't. Older adults often have unrecognized heart and lung conditions. People with these conditions are at greater risk of worsening disease, hospitalization, or death. Symptoms may include wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain or discomfort, sudden overwhelming fatigue, and rapid heartbeat. Contact your health care provider if you are experiencing any of these symptoms. Call 911 if you cannot reach your provider.

PUBLIC HEALTH * VITAL RECORDS



HIV/AIDS * ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Air quality is expected to improve throughout the day and through the weekend. Light and variable winds will gradually develop through the Columbia basin and help flush out the wildfire smoke. This should return air quality to the seasonal normal conditions.

For additional information on the wildfire smoke and smoke related issues, please visit the following resources:

Washington State Department of Health
Smoke from fires:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/AirQuality/OutdoorAir/SmokeFromFires.aspx>

Washington State Department of Ecology
Air Monitoring Sites (GIS Map)

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/enwiwa/Default.htm>

Air Resources Board

Wildfire Smoke: A Guide to Public Health

www.arb.ca.gov/carpa/toolkit/data-to-mes/wildfire-smoke-guide.pdf

Whitman County Public Health

www.whitmancounty.org/publichealth