

Toronto blanketed by wildfire smoke from Quebec. Here's how you can stay safe.

Smoke is engulfing Toronto. The wildfires this year have caused the city's air quality index (AQI) to drop to an all time low. The smoke emerging from wildfires in Quebec and other provinces have covered large parts of Canada and the US in a hazy smog, leaving the skies looking orange.

The smoke from these fires causes noticeable changes in the air. The air itself is heavy to breathe, causing an itchy throat and nose. Poor AQI means that the air contains tiny particles that are 30 times smaller than a human hair follicle. Breathing these particles in can be dangerous and be equated to smoking 7 cigarettes a day if you spend too long being outdoors in these conditions.

This can mean trouble for people with breathing problems like asthma and bronchitis, people with heart and lung conditions and those who exercise outdoors. Not only does the air have potential to be damaging to people with pre-existing conditions but can also be a cause for a healthy person to start developing issues.

We need to be vigilant during this time and take precautionary measures to ensure that our health doesn't worsen. Staying indoors would be our best option. Making sure windows and doors are closed and that there are no pollutants inside the house that cause smoke, such as tobacco and fireplaces. If possible, also using a portable HEPA air filter can help clean any potentially polluted air inside the house.

If you do go out, ensure that you set the air-conditioning in your vehicle to indoor circulation so that the pollutants from outside don't get into your car. If you plan on visiting any public places, it would be advisable to go somewhere with a controlled air supply, like a mall or library. Exercising outdoors in these conditions is not advisable but an alternative would be to go to a local gymnasium instead.

During the pandemic, we learnt something completely alien to us; wearing masks wherever we go. Now, masks are going to be just as handy when we go outdoors. Wearing a mask is a great way for us to minimize our exposure to the polluted air and effectively cut out the small particles found in the air.

This period is temporary. The wildfires are bad, but we need to put faith into our government and firefighters who are tirelessly working to subdue the fires. We need to do our part, which is to take precautionary measures and stay indoors as much as possible. The impact the fires can have on our health may not immediately be evident but can creep up when we least expect it to. We must keep ourselves, our children and those immediately at risk as safe as possible and work together in these difficult times.

Persuasive elements used:

1. Use facts, statistics and studies
2. Appeal to emotions

Audience: Torontonians and everyone affected by the smoke emerging from the wildfires in Quebec.

Purpose: To inform the audience of the effects of the wildfire smoke and persuade them to take precautions against wildfire smoke.

Proposition: Urging people to wear masks when outdoors and to stay indoors as much as possible.

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