

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA DURING PERIODS OF HEAVY SMOKE

People with asthma are susceptible to bushfire smoke, however there are strategies you can use to minimise smoke exposure

## How?



### Stay Indoors

- Avoid outdoor activity to reduce exposure to bushfire smoke
- Close all windows and doors and use the air-conditioner on recycled air - if available
- Avoid indoor sources of air pollution like candles, woodfire, incense sticks and cigarettes
- Work from home where able
- Use telehealth where available
- Partake indoor exercise during periods of heavy smoke

- P2/N95 rated face masks can help to filter out the particulates in bushfire smoke
- Masks must be fitted well and maintain a tight seal to be effective
- Cloth, surgical masks and bandanas do not filter out smoke particles
- People with asthma who are required to work outside or cannot avoid exposure to bushfire smoke should wear a face mask (P2/N95)
- Masks can make breathing more difficult and increase thermal discomfort- check with you healthcare professional before wearing a mask

### Face Masks



## Air Quality

- People with asthma should be encouraged to check local air quality information and public health messages
- Using apps, such as AirRater provides access real time air quality

Air Quality Index & Indicator		What does it mean?*
0-33	Very Good	Enjoy normal activities
34-66	Good	Enjoy normal activities
67-99	Fair	People unusually sensitive to air pollution should reduce or reschedule strenuous outdoor activities
100-149	Poor	Sensitive groups should reduce or reschedule outdoor activities
150-199	Very Poor	Sensitive groups should avoid strenuous outdoor activities
200+	Hazardous	Sensitive groups should avoid all outdoor activities

\*Adapted from NSW Health

References: Carlsten et al. Personal strategies to minimise effects of air pollution on respiratory health: advice for providers, patients and the public. *Eur Respir J.* 2020;55(6); Cherrie et al. Effectiveness of face masks used to protect Beijing residents against particulate air pollution. *Occup. Environ Med.* 2018;75(6):446-52; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Non-occupational uses of respiratory protection – what public health organizations and users need to know. Shakya et al. Evaluating the efficacy of cloth facemasks in reducing particulate matter exposure. *J Expo Sci Environ Epidemiol.* 2017;27(3):352-7; US Food and Drug Administration. N95 Respirators, Surgical Masks, and Face Masks. Vardoulakis et al. Bushfire smoke: urgent need for a national health protection strategy. *Med J Aust.* 2020;212(8):349-53.e1

Developed as part of the:



**ASTHMA  
AUSTRALIA**