

MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE BUSHFIRE SEASON

There are possible adverse mental health effects during the bushfire season for people with asthma



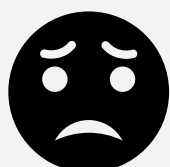
Exposure to bushfire smoke can cause symptoms of anxiety and depression

Psychological factors can trigger asthma symptoms and influence medication adherence



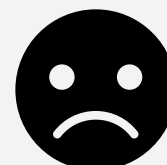
These mental health effects might be short-lived or persist for many years after the bushfire

For people with asthma breathing smoky air and reading or watching different media reports can create headline stress disorder



Health care providers should encourage access to mental health support if needed

It may be useful for health care providers to discuss plans with patients for controlling symptoms of their asthma when they are feeling anxious and depressed during the bushfire season



TIPS FOR MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE BUSHFIRE SEASON

- Access reliable information from government and health authorities during the bushfire period
- Exercise caution around the volume of news and social media intake
- Have regular social contact and maintain routines at home
- Reach out to family and friends online or via the phone during prolonged bushfire smoke exposure
- Seek professional mental health support if required or contact support services such as Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636 or Lifeline 13 11 14
- Maintain exercise and a healthy diet where possible- including exercising indoors to avoid smoke exposure