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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ohio Department of Health Director Encourages Precautions Amid Unhealthy Air Quality

COLUMBUS – Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Bruce Vanderhoff, MD, MBA, is once again encouraging Ohioans to be aware of possible health effects, as smoke from Canadian wildfires is causing poor air quality in the state.

For the second time in three weeks, the wildfire smoke has created unhealthy conditions in Ohio, according to [AirNow.gov](https://airnow.gov).

“It is important to take poor air quality seriously, as exposure to smoke can cause health problems,” Dr. Vanderhoff said. “Certain groups of people are at higher risk, such as those with chronic heart or lung disease, children, the elderly, and pregnant women. Please take precautions until these conditions improve.”

Smoke from wildfires contains particulates. Particulates can be inhaled into your lungs and cause irritation of the eyes, nose or throat, coughing, shortness of breath, and chest pain; and can also aggravate chronic heart and lung conditions.

The most important precaution is to limit outdoor activity, especially outdoor exercise, and spend more time indoors.

Other precautions include:

- Spend time in a room you can close off from outside air.
- Avoid using candles, gas, propane, wood-burning stoves, fireplaces, and aerosol sprays. Smoking tobacco products and vacuuming may worsen indoor air pollution.
- If you have a central air conditioning system, use high efficiency filters to capture fine particles from smoke. If your system has a fresh air intake, set the system to recirculate mode or close the outdoor intake damper.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water. If your eyes, nose or throat are irritated, running a humidifier may provide some relief.

It also is important to check in on anyone who is more at risk and to carefully monitor children.

Those with asthma are encouraged to carefully follow your [asthma action plan](#), if you have one. Make sure you have enough medication for several days.

Those with heart disease or COPD should pay close attention to symptoms such as chest pain or tightness, a fast heartbeat, feeling more out of breath than usual, or extreme fatigue. Contact your doctor, or if symptoms are severe, call 9-1-1.

To see real-time air quality in your area, visit the AirNow website.

For more health information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, visit [Protect Yourself from Wildfire Smoke](#).

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About the Ohio Department of Health

The Ohio Department of Health's mission is advancing the health and well-being of all Ohioans by transforming the state's public health system through unique partnerships and funding streams; addressing the community conditions and inequities that lead to disparities in health outcomes; and implementing data-driven, evidence-based solutions.