

## ARE YOU PREPARED?



## Tips to Help You Stay Safe During Poor Air Quality

Poor air quality can be caused by wildfire smoke, ozone, pollution, or other environmental conditions. It can affect everyone; but children, older adults, and people with asthma, COPD, heart disease, or other respiratory conditions are at greater risk. Preparing ahead of time and taking simple precautions can help protect your health.

### Monitor Air Quality

- Check the **Air Quality Index (AQI)** each day through [AirNow.gov](https://www.airnow.gov), local weather reports, or air quality alerts.
- The AQI measures air pollution on a scale from **0–500**:
  - **0–50**: Good
  - **51–100**: Moderate
  - **101–150**: Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups
  - **151–200**: Unhealthy
  - **201–300**: Very Unhealthy
  - **301+**: Hazardous

### Limit Outdoor Exposure

When the AQI is **Moderate (51)** or higher:

- Reduce time spent outdoors, especially during periods of heavy pollution or wildfire smoke.
- Avoid strenuous outdoor activities such as running, biking, or sports.
- Keep children's outdoor play to a minimum.
- Stay away from busy roads and high-traffic areas, where pollution levels can be higher even on days with good overall air quality.

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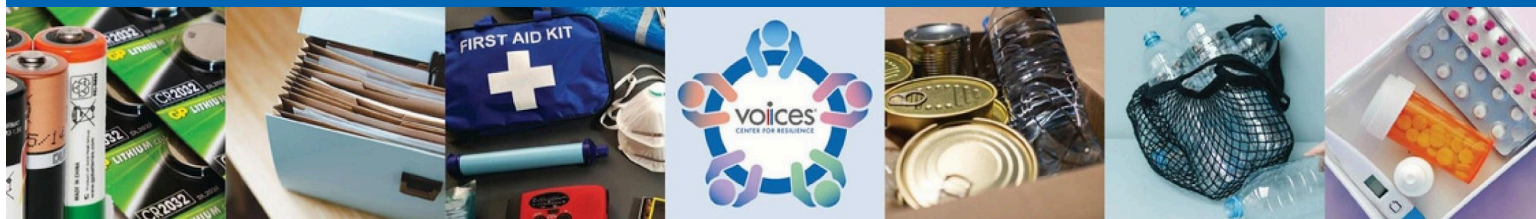
Voices Center for Resilience provides long-term support and resources that promote mental health care and wellness for victims' families, responders, and survivors, and assists communities preparing for and recovering from traumatic events.

Voices Center for Resilience, formerly Voices of September 11<sup>th</sup>, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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### Protect Your Indoor Air

- Stay indoors and keep windows and doors closed.
- Seal gaps around doors or windows with damp towels if smoke is entering your home.
- Run your air conditioner in **recirculate** mode and keep the fresh air intake closed.
- Use a **HEPA filter air purifier** in frequently used rooms whenever possible.
- Avoid using single-hose portable air conditioners during wildfire smoke events because they can pull polluted outdoor air inside.
- Do not use fireplaces or wood-burning stoves during poor air quality events.

### Reduce Air Pollution

Everyone can help improve air quality by making small changes:

- Use less electricity whenever possible.
- Walk, bike, carpool, or use public transportation instead of driving alone.
- Avoid burning wood, trash, or yard waste.
- Limit the use of older gas-powered lawn equipment that produces higher emissions.

### Take Extra Precautions

People at greater risk including **children, older adults, pregnant people, and those with asthma, COPD, or heart disease** should:

- Follow their healthcare provider's recommendations.
- Keep medications, such as inhalers, readily available.
- Contact a healthcare provider if breathing problems or other symptoms worsen.
- Remember that wildfire smoke can affect indoor air even when it is not visible.

Have a family plan for extended poor air quality events caused by wildfires or extreme weather.

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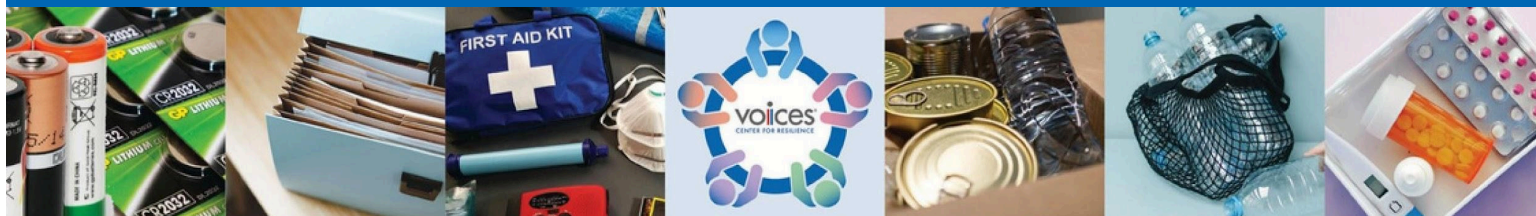
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## Stay Informed

- Follow air quality alerts from the **National Weather Service (NWS)** and the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**.
- Monitor wildfire conditions using the Fire and Smoke Map.
- Be prepared to adjust outdoor plans based on changing air quality conditions. .

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### Helpful Resources

- Home Air Quality Monitors: Consumer-grade monitors can provide basic information, but some models offer more accurate and reliable readings than others.
- Respirator Masks: A properly fitted N95 or KN95 respirator can help reduce exposure to wildfire smoke, air pollution, and airborne particles when outdoor exposure cannot be avoided.
- Air Purifiers: A portable air purifier with a HEPA filter can improve indoor air quality by reducing smoke and fine particle pollution.

## Remember

Poor air quality can develop quickly and last for several days. Checking the AQI, limiting exposure, improving indoor air, and staying informed can help protect you and your family. Planning ahead before smoke or pollution arrives makes it easier to stay safe when air quality worsens.

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