

## **Protect Yourself and Your Family From Wildfire Smoke and Ash**

Wildfires in Central Texas have put smoke into the atmosphere and left behind ash and rubble. Smoke and ash from wildfires can make you cough, and irritate your eyes, nose, skin and throat. If you see or smell smoke take some steps to protect yourself and your family:

- If the smoke is dense, listen for evacuation orders from your local officials.
- Limit outdoor activities, especially children's play and hard outside work.
- Stay indoors with the windows and doors closed (see below for no air conditioner).
- Watch for repeated coughing, shortness of breath, tightness or pain in the chest, palpitations, nausea, unusual fatigue or dizziness, particularly if there is a medical history of chronic lung disease (like asthma or COPD) or heart disease. Contact your healthcare provider if you have questions or 911 for emergencies.

If you return to an area affected by fire, protect yourself and your family from wildfire ash and injury from nails and other sharp objects. Spend as little time at burned properties as possible.

- Avoid items that may contain chemicals including: batteries, paints, pesticides, plastics, melted metal and electric wire.
- If you smell gas do not enter the area or building, do not turn on the lights or light a match; instead leave the area immediately then call 911.
- Avoid fallen electric lines-do not touch them or go near them-they could kill you.
- Be sure to wear sturdy closed-toed shoes, long pants and a sleeved shirt.
- Do not let children touch, play in or help clean up the ash or debris.
- Wear a mask called a "particulate" respirator (N-95 or P-100 worn according to manufacture guidelines) and use gloves when cleaning up.
- Avoid activity that stirs up the ash, do not sweep the ash.
- Get a tetanus shot if you have not had a booster in 10 years or can't remember when your last shot was.
- Use a wet cloth to clean toys, and a wet mop to clean floors and decks.
- Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning by placing generators, power washers, camp stoves, charcoal grills or other fuel burning devices at least 50 feet away from the house and opened doors and windows.

**For more public health information about protecting yourself and your family or to learn how to get your family prepared in the event of an emergency go to our web page at:**

**[www.dshs.state.tx.us/region7](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/region7)**

**and click on the section about wild fires and important public health information.**