

Smoke, air quality and health

Bushfire and weather conditions in Tasmania over the coming weeks will result in periods of smoky conditions.

Pregnant women, infants and children, elderly persons, smokers, and people with chronic medical conditions (especially lung and heart conditions) are more sensitive to the effects of smoke.

It is important for persons at risk from smoke to have a management plan with their GP for exacerbations of their medical condition such as asthma, and for them to know when to use their plan.

The following is the key public health advice about managing smoky conditions:

- Avoid physical activity outdoors when it is smoky.
- Stay indoors with windows and doors closed where possible.
- If using an air conditioner, switch it to 'recycle' or 'recirculate'.
- Consider visiting family or friends, or the library or shopping centre, if your home gets too hot for comfort or a lot of smoke from the outside gets in.
- If there is a break in smoky conditions, open the windows and air out your home.
- Get immediate medical advice if you experience symptoms such as breathing difficulties or chest pain.
- Get real-time air quality information for your area on the EPA BLANKET website, or by downloading the AirRater app and subscribing to alerts.

Useful links

- Smoke and health fact sheet: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/air/bushfire_smoke
- Real-time air quality data on the EPA BLANKET website: <https://epa.tas.gov.au/epa/air/monitoring-air-pollution/real-time-air-quality-data-for-tasmania>
- Information about AirRater: <https://airrater.org/>
- TasALERT (official emergency information source, with many links): www.alert.tas.gov.au/
- Tasmania Fire Service (includes list and map of alerts): www.fire.tas.gov.au/
- Public Health Hotline 1800 671 738