



Mono County Health and Human Services

County Health Officer Warns of Smoke from the Benton Area Fire

By: Dr. Richard Johnson, P.H.O.
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Mammoth Lakes - Parents and individuals with sensitive health conditions who live near areas affected by the Benton area fire should stay alert to changing smoke levels and be prepared to act accordingly, Mono County Public Health Officer Dr. Richard Johnson, advised today.

Smoky conditions can be hazardous for young children, the elderly, individuals with heart conditions or chronic lung disease such as asthma and bronchitis, and individuals with other respiratory ailments.

Because of the uncertainty of fire conditions, Johnson advises residents near the fire to be prepared. Individuals with asthma, bronchitis, emphysema and other lung or heart diseases should make sure that they are on medication and have at least a five-day supply on hand. Individuals with asthma should consult their physician about an asthma management plan and stick to it during unusually smoky conditions. Listen for radio and television messages about fires in your area.

Johnson also advised residents to be prepared to stay indoors and limit their activity if necessary. Check for a "recirculation" function on your air conditioner. If smoke is present, it will be easier to breathe indoors if air is recirculating instead of drawing smoky air from outdoors. Contact your doctor if you have symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, or severe fatigue. This is important for not only people with chronic lung or heart disease, but also for individuals who have not been previously diagnosed with such illnesses. Smoke can "unmask" or produce symptoms of such diseases. Since travel across Hwy 120 or Benton Crossing Road to Hwy 395 may be blocked, be prepared to travel to Bishop for medical care. If you are unable to seek medical care on your own, or need assistance, please call 911.



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