

SAFETY



BULLETIN

September 10, 2020

UCSF Monitors Changing Air Quality Due to Wildfire Smoke [Update #1](#)

UCSF leaders and emergency management teams are monitoring fluctuating air quality, excessive heat, and fire weather to help protect the safety and security of employees, learners and patients.

Air quality in San Francisco and Oakland continues to change based on conditions between moderate, unhealthy for sensitive groups, and unhealthy. Active youth, adults, and people with respiratory diseases should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion when at unhealthy levels. Everyone else, especially children, should limit outdoor exertion. Take more breaks during outdoor activities. Air quality index in Fresno is currently moderate and forecast to be unhealthy later today.

Members of the UCSF community are encouraged to check the air quality index (AQI) in their area by visiting the Environmental Protection Agency's [AirNow website](#). This website includes a search box to check air quality by zip code, as well as maps identifying what actions are advised.

This safety bulletin provides guidance from Bay Area Regional Air Quality experts on the following:

- How to keep yourself and others safe
- What to do to avoid poor air quality
- What you should know about N95 respirators and masks

How to Keep Yourself and Others Safe

- Check on friends, family, and neighbors. Older adults, pregnant individuals, children, and people with respiratory illness are susceptible to elevated air pollution levels and should take precautions to avoid exposure.
- Smoke can irritate the eyes and airways, causing cough, a dry scratchy throat, runny nose, trouble breathing, and irritated sinuses. Stay hydrated by drinking water during heavy smoke events.
- Avoid adding additional air pollution by curtailing activities such as wood burning, lawn mowing, leaf blowing, driving, barbecuing, smoking, or other dust producing activities. Avoid using hairspray and painting indoors. If possible, use the stove

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Mike Denson
Chief of Police

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fan when cooking.

- Sign up for alerts in your area. Local smoke levels can rise and fall rapidly, depending on weather factors, including wind direction.

What to Do to Avoid Poor Air Quality

- Staying indoors with windows and doors closed is the best way to protect your health.
- Set air conditioning units and car vent systems to re-circulate to prevent outside air from moving inside
- Leave the affected area, if possible, for the duration of the heavy smoke event.

What You Should Know about Respirators and Masks

- The extraordinary circumstances of preventing the spread of COVID-19 require UCSF to prioritize making N95 masks available for health care workers in clinical settings using the [guidelines currently in place for COVID-19](#). N95 masks for wildfire smoke-related purposes are prioritized for those in the following two groups:
 - UCSF employees who work for prolonged periods of time outdoors, and
 - UCSF employees and learners who have underlying medical conditions that make them vulnerable to the effects of wildfire smoke.
- Supervisors have made N95 masks available to outdoor workers. Those with underlying medical conditions should consult with [Occupational Health Services](#) and [UCSF Student Health and Counseling Services](#) to request an N95 mask. In Oakland, check with the hospital supervisor. Please note that due to a limited supply of N95 masks, only one mask will be given per person, per incident. It is important to note that N95 masks are not appropriate for children and that anyone who uses an N95 mask should follow the [instructions for their proper use](#).
- UCSF Health employees working inside of UCSF Health facilities must continue to follow COVID-19 universal masking procedures. The use of N95 masks in the clinical setting should remain limited to current clinical guidelines as noted on the [Hospital Epidemiology and Infection Control website](#).
- N95 respirators are no substitute for being indoors. If you need to be outdoors, here is what you need to know:
 - N95 respirators may not be helpful for all people and may be dangerous for certain people with lung or heart conditions.
 - Certified N95s are not available for children. Children should not wear these masks; they do not fit children properly and can impede breathing.
 - If you choose to wear an N95 respirator, follow the manufacturer's recommendations for proper fit.
 - Wearing an ill-fitted respirator can lead to a false sense of security and to over exertion.

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- Taking an N95 respirator on and off can cause fine particulate matter to build up in the respirator, which the wearer will breathe when it is put back on the face.
- Use a new respirator. Old or reused N95 respirators are not effective.
- N95 masks, even when worn properly, can become uncomfortable and hot.
- Cloth face coverings and typical surgical masks do nothing to protect against smoke particles.
- More information about N95s can be found [online here](#).

Stay Informed

- More information about UCSF's wildfire and air quality response will be updated as soon as possible [online](#).
- Managers have received information from HR about how to respond to questions and requests from impacted employees.
- Sign up for UCSF WarnMe and include your cellphone number for UCSF emergency alerts and notifications.

Contact Information:

- Emergency: Dial **911**
- Hospital Supervisor
 - UCSF Parnassus: 415-353-8036
 - UCSF Mission Bay: 415-502-0728
 - BCH-OAK: 510-428-6997
- Hospital Security
 - SF: 415-885-7890
 - BCH-OAK: 510-428-3600
- Hospital Facilities
 - SF: 415-514-3570
 - BCH-OAK: 510-428-3291
- Campus Facilities
 - SF: 415-476-2021
 - Fresno: 559-313-9661

Help fight crime by reporting suspicious persons and/or suspicious activity to UCSF PD immediately—race, gender, and religious affiliation are NOT considered suspicious. For emergency or in-progress events, dial **911 when using on-campus land lines and 415.476-6911 when using cell phones. For non-emergency calls, please dial 415.476-1414.**

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Stay safe. **Sign up now.**



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