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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Office of Communications 614-644-8562

Ohio Department of Health encourages awareness of air-quality health effects

Director Bruce Vanderhoff, MD, MBA says certain groups are more at risk

COLUMBUS – Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Bruce Vanderhoff, MD, MBA, is asking Ohioans to be aware of possible health effects due to the poor air quality in the state caused by smoke from Canadian wildfires.

On Wednesday, the Ohio EPA issued a [statewide air quality advisory](#), and said particulate levels are expected to be elevated through Thursday.

“Exposure to smoke can cause health problems for anyone, but certain groups are more at risk than others,” Dr. Vanderhoff said. “These include people with chronic heart or lung disease, children, the elderly, and pregnant women. It is important to take precautions until our air quality improves.”

Smoke from wildfires contains particulates. Particulates can be inhaled into your lungs and cause irritation of the eyes, nose or throat, coughing, shortness of breath, and chest pain; and can also aggravate chronic heart and lung conditions.

The most important precaution is to limit outdoor activity, especially outdoor exercise, and spend more time indoors.

Other precautions include:

- Spend time in a room you can close off from outside air.
- Avoid using candles, gas, propane, wood-burning stoves, fireplaces, and aerosol sprays. Frying or broiling meat, smoking tobacco products, and vacuuming may worsen indoor air pollution.
- If you have a central air conditioning system, use high efficiency filters to capture fine particles from smoke. If your system has a fresh air intake, set the system to recirculate mode or close the outdoor intake damper.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water. If your eyes, nose or throat are irritated, running a humidifier may provide some relief.

It also is important to check in on anyone who is more at risk and to carefully monitor children.

Those with asthma are encouraged to carefully follow your [asthma action plan](#), if you have one. Make sure you have enough medication for several days.

Those with heart disease or COPD should pay close attention to symptoms such as chest pain or tightness, a fast heartbeat, feeling more out of breath than usual, or extreme fatigue. Contact your doctor, or if symptoms are severe, call 9-1-1.

To see real-time air quality in your area, visit the [AirNow website](#).

For more health information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, visit [Protect Yourself from Wildfire Smoke](#).

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About the Ohio Department of Health

The Ohio Department of Health's mission is advancing the health and well-being of all Ohioans by transforming the state's public health system through unique partnerships and funding streams; addressing the community conditions and inequities that lead to disparities in health outcomes; and implementing data-driven, evidence-based solutions.