



Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

Take caution as air quality deteriorates

From: Evans Army Community Hospital Preventive Medicine

As of Monday morning, many active wildfires burned around the state of Colorado. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment rates air quality for the Front Range to be moderate-to-unhealthy for sensitive groups. Sensitive groups include people with health issues, children and the elderly. These fires are giving off smoke and particulates.

Colorado Springs is expected to see declining air quality as the smoke from the Waldo Canyon Fire descends into Manitou Springs and then Colorado Springs later Monday morning. Smoke from this fire is predicted to move north later today. Several areas of Colorado Springs are being actively monitored for air quality.

What to watch

The Air Quality Index can help you know when to take appropriate precautions when either particle pollution or ozone is high:

Protecting Your Health From Particle Pollution

Good (0–50): None

Moderate (51–100): Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion.

Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101–150): The following groups should reduce prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion:

- People with heart or lung disease
- Children and older adults

*Everyone else should limit prolonged or heavy exertion.

Unhealthy (151–200): The following groups should avoid all physical outdoor exertion:

- People with heart or lung disease
- Children and older adults

*Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion.

Very Unhealthy (201–300): The following groups should remain indoors and keep activity levels low:

- People with heart or lung disease
- Children and older adults

*Everyone else should avoid all physical activity outdoors.



Protecting Your Health From Ozone

Good (0–50): None

Moderate (51–100): Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion.

Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101–150): The following groups should reduce prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion:

- People with lung disease, such as asthma
- Children and older adults
- People who are active outdoors

Unhealthy (151–200): The following groups should avoid prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion:

- People with heart or lung disease, such as asthma
- Children and older adults
- People who are active outdoors

*Everyone else should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion.

Very Unhealthy (201–300): The following groups should avoid all outdoor exertion:

- People with lung disease, such as asthma
- Children and older adults
- People who are active outdoors

*Everyone else should limit outdoor exertion.

Simple measures to take

Even if you don't know the numbers, some common sense can help you determine what actions to take. If visibility in your area is limited to five miles or less due to smoke, air quality is unhealthy and you should limit your exertion and stay inside, regardless of health status. In general, listen to your body. If your eyes burn or the smell of smoke bothers you, it's best for you to try to stay indoors.

Those with asthma can be especially affected by the presence of smoke in the environment, regardless of measured air quality. If you suffer from asthma, make sure you are taking any prescribed medications appropriately and keep a rescue inhaler on hand. As previously stated, limit exertion and remain indoors if you can. If your asthma symptoms do not improve or become worse even with use of medications and rescue inhalers, see your health care provider as soon as possible.

Finding the Air Quality Index numbers

For further information and updates regarding air quality in the area, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment updates this information regularly at http://www.colorado.gov/airquality/air_quality.aspx.