



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

NUMBER:
FOR RELEASE:
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov>

PH08-36
IMMEDIATE

DATE: July 8, 2008
CONTACT: Suanne Buggy
or Lea Brooks
(916)-440-7259

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH OFFERS ADVICE TO RESIDENTS AMID SMOKE AND HIGH HEAT

SACRAMENTO – Dr. Mark Horton, director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), today urged individuals to take steps to protect themselves against the combined danger posed by high heat predicted throughout the week and poor air quality due to wildfire smoke in many areas.

“Children, the elderly and people with heart, circulation or breathing problems are especially vulnerable to both heat and smoke,” Horton said. “Individuals should regularly check on neighbors, particularly elders, and seek medical help if you see or experience signs of heat-related illness, including nausea, headache, vomiting, unusual fatigue or problems breathing.”

Air conditioning for those who have it provides protection in areas that are hit with both heat and smoke because it provides cool, filtered air. This week the heat is expected to be extreme in areas of the state where air conditioning isn't common, such as along the coast and in the foothills and mountain areas. Residents who do not have air conditioning should visit friends or family member's homes, a public place such as a library or shopping mall or seek out a public cooling center.

Government, local law enforcement or local health departments can provide information about public cooling centers available in their area.

If air conditioning is not available and it is not possible to relocate, some precautions against smoke and heat-related illness are:

- Lower body temperature by using cold compresses, misting and taking cool showers, baths or sponge baths.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. However, if your doctor has told you to limit the amount you drink or you are taking water pills, ask your doctor how much you should drink during the heat.
- Avoid drinks with alcohol or large amounts of sugar, as these can promote dehydration.
- Avoid physical exertion.

- Wear lightweight and light-colored clothing.

If you have to be outside in a smoky area, wearing a mask called a “particulate respirator” can help protect your lungs from wildfire smoke. Choose a mask that has two straps and has “**NIOSH**” and either “**N95**” or “**P100**” printed on it and follow the manufacturer’s instructions carefully. It is harder to breathe with a mask on, so take frequent breaks if you are working and check with your doctor before using a mask if you have heart or lung disease. Do not use bandanas (wet or dry), paper or surgical masks or tissues held over the mouth and nose. These will not protect your lungs from wildfire smoke.

More information about protecting yourself and others from the effects of excessive heat and wildfire smoke is available on the Be Prepared California Web site at www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov, the California Department of Public Health Web site at www.cdph.ca.gov or the State Office of Emergency Services Web site at www.oes.ca.gov.

#