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MENDOCINO COUNTY
AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

ADVISORIES FOR MENDOCINO COUNTY

AIR QUALITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Tuesday through Wednesday, August 7-8, 2018

August 7, 2018 12:00 PM: The smoke and haze from the River and Ranch Fires are currently impacting selected areas of eastern Mendocino and all of Lake Counties. Currently air monitors show particulate matter concentrations in the "Good" to "Moderate" range for most of the County. Inland communities and surrounding areas may experience episodes of "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" air quality. These include Hopland, Ukiah, Calpella, Redwood Valley, Potter Valley, Willits, and Covelo. Portions of Clearlake and all of the north shore are under an "Unhealthy" air quality alert due to heavy smoke conditions. All other areas of Lake County are forecast to have "Moderate" to "Unhealthy" conditions depending on the wind and fire conditions. Based on forecast of continued high pressure and northwesterly winds, existing conditions are expected to continue through at least Wednesday. Please see the accompanying Public Health Advisory for recommendations of personal protection for sensitive groups, as well as, everyone during "Unhealthy", or more severe, air quality conditions.

Mendocino County Air Quality Management District continuously monitors the air quality, reporting particulate matter and ozone concentrations hourly to our website: **www.mendoair.org**. In the sidebar on the right of our webpage (scroll down if using a mobile device), under **"Air Quality for Mendocino"--Click Here** for current conditions, forecast, and email alerts. For additional information, click on an air quality index range, or the colored tabs below the map.

For more air quality information visit:
https://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=airnow.local_city&mapcenter=0&cityid=535

To sign up for air quality notifications visit: http://www.enviroflash.info/signup.cfm

Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency
Healthy People, Healthy Communities
Tammy Moss Chandler, Director
Anne Molgaard, Chief Operations Officer

Barbara Howe, Public Health Director
Gary Pace, M.D., Public Health Officer

When the Mendocino Air Quality Management District advises that the air quality is"unhealthy" or "hazardous:"

A primary concern is that 'high-risk groups" --people over 65, under 12, pregnant women, and those people with pre-existing lung disease (such as asthma, bronchitis, COPD) or heart problems-- are at particular risk from breathing this air and should take extra precautions. Leave the smoky area, if possible, or at least stay indoors and limit physical activity.

- People with pre-existing illnesses should carefully adhere to their medical treatment plans and maintain at least a five-day supply of prescribed medications.
- Clearly, everyone is a risk when the air quality is in the "unhealthy" or "hazardous" range. If it is not possible to leave the area where smoke is present, recommendations are to limit outdoor activity and unnecessary physical exertion.
- Smoke from wildfires contains chemicals, gases, and fine particles that can harm health. The greatest hazard comes from breathing fine particles, which can reduce lung function, worsen asthma and other existing heart and lung conditions, and cause coughing, wheezing and difficulty breathing.
- Wearing a protective mask may offer some protection. N-95 masks can reduce contact with some of the harmful particulate matter, but they also increase the work of breathing and they don't keep the smoke out, so they are not terribly effective as a general protective measure. It is much better to avoid the smoky air, if possible.
    - N95 masks are very useful during the cleanup phase when the ash is a big issue.
    - If you would like N95 masks, they can be obtained for free at the libraries, the senior centers, and the shelters.
    - If you have trouble locating masks and you would like them, contact us at Public Health.
    - Dust masks (different from N95) are not protective and really should not be used.
- If you have air conditioning, turn it to interior recirculation or turn off and use fans. This prevents the intake of the outside, smoky air. Avoid vacuuming (which stirs up the dust) or increasing smoke in the house (for example burning candles or incense, or smoking cigarettes).
- There are no indications that any permanent problems such as cancer will develop due to short term exposure to smoke such as this. Since the air problems currently are almost exclusively from woodsmoke, there are no real industrial contaminants that might lead to other long-term problems.
- If you, or someone with you, begins to experience significant symptoms, such as dizziness, shortness of breath, or chest discomfort, get them out of the smoke and have them rest. If symptoms continue, seek medical attention.
- Getting enough rest and drinking plenty of fluids may be helpful.