
FROM THE DESKS OF
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To Our Patients,

Apparently, I created a bit of a ruckus in the Guerrasio household back in New York. Fear not, a ruckus in our family is more like a “Seinfeld” comedy skit. Dad was a bit jealous that, “Only your Mom was in the newspaper?” So, let me introduce you to my dad, who has been an active volunteer fireman for over 50 years. I’m sure if it were not for COVID-19 he would be flying to Colorado to help with all of the wildfires! It was his selfless spirit that lead me to a career in medicine.

Even those of us with healthy lungs were choking and rubbing our irritated and burning eyes this past week. Dave’s eyes were red after his last golf game and running is no longer an enjoyable part of the morning routine. As the wildfires continue to grow in Colorado, we decided that this week’s topic should be air pollution and health.

Food for thought

- Tip of the week: Compliment yourself. Right now, before you continue reading, take a minute to praise yourself out loud.
- Many of you are unaware of just how amazing you really are. The way you make people laugh, smile, lift others up or spread some extra love. You do this even though you are struggling too and I think it makes you such a beautiful human being.

Updates on COVID 19 nasal swab testing

- One of my favorite COVID-19 testing companies now has a site in Denver and is open Monday-Friday 8am-1pm. They do both nasal swab and antibody testing. If needed go to: <https://www.cocovidriveup.com/>
- If you just need antibody testing to see if you have had COVID-19 in the remote past (>14 days ago) you can come to the office for antibody testing as well.

Flu shots

- We will announce when flu shots become available. I suspect this will be in the middle September.



- EVERY ONE should get, unless you have a true allergic reaction and those folks (<5) know who they are. This is especially important because COVID-19 is in the air. Getting both would be fatal and even just getting the flu may become very hard to diagnose as there has been an intermittent shortage of testing supplies.

Smoke is Unhealthy for Everyone

When you hear that smoke is bad for you, do you think of cigarette smoke first? If so, we must thank the public service announcement from the American Lung Association in the 1970's – "It's a matter of life and breath." This is a very important message that now extends to vaping and marijuana, but this article is also about industrial pollution and now forest fires. All of these cause air pollution.

You may not be surprised to hear that air pollution causes premature deaths due to lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (formerly emphysema). But, did you know that it also causes death from strokes, cardiovascular disease including heart attacks and lower respiratory tract infections?

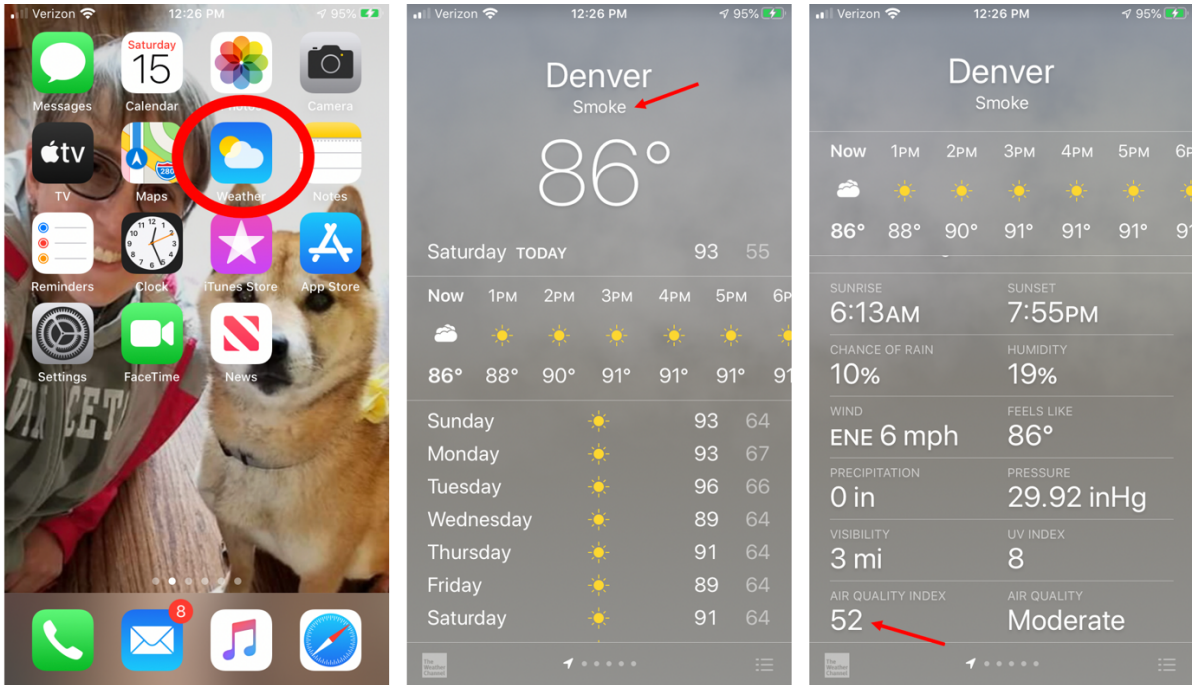


Pollutants with the worst impact on our health are: particulate matter (dust), ozone, nitrous oxide and sulfur dioxide. Wildfires, as we have had, release lots of particulate matter, plus carbon dioxide, black carbon, brown carbon, and ozone precursors into the air. As a physician, I try as hard to prevent disability as I do death. It is equally concerning that these pollutants reduce lung function, increase non-lethal respiratory infections, aggravate asthma and other underlying lung conditions, affect diabetes and neurologic development.

What can you do?

1. **Check the local air quality report.** For some perspective, I'm writing this newsletter on Saturday and, as a reminder, Friday was the day everything smelled like it was on fire and the air quality was at its worst. Now take a moment to look at your Smart Phone. Look for the icon that says, "Weather." See photo on the left with the icon circled in red. Click on that icon and you will see a screen that looks like the picture in the middle. As you can see from the red arrow, there is still a lot of smoke in the air. Usually this says, sunny or partly cloudy. Now scroll down to the bottom of that page and you will find a number for the air quality index. In the morning it was 52, but in the afternoon it was 107. Last Thursday, it was 166!!! To the right of that number, you will find a description of the air quality. Today it is moderate. Yesterday it was unhealthy, for all populations (lung/heart disease or not). It is also important to note that very, very, very

small particles are not included in the index. So when it is smoky, the number underestimates how bad the air quality truly is.



2. **Decide how to spend your day.** See the colorful guide to help you understand what the air quality index numbers mean for you. We traded our outdoor hike for a round on the elliptical and some weight lifting. Even if you are healthy, the particulate matter can cause cough,

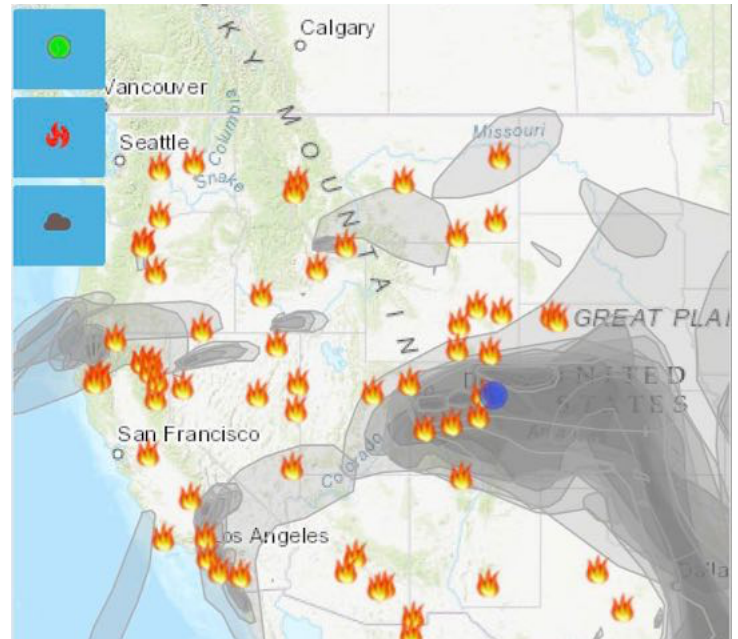
Color Code	AQI Value	Actions to Protect Your Health
Green	Good (0-50)	None.
Yellow	Moderate (51-100)	Unusually sensitive people should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion outdoors.
Orange	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101-150)	Sensitive groups should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion outdoors: People with heart and lung disease Children and older adults People that are active outdoors
Red	Unhealthy (151-200)	Sensitive groups should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion outdoors. Everyone should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion outdoors.
Purple	Very Unhealthy (201-300)	Sensitive groups should avoid all physical activity outdoors. Everyone should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion outdoors.

shortness of breath, wheezing, irritated eyes, scratching throat, runny nose, chest pain, headache and fatigue.

3. **Consider using air filters.** Freestanding indoor air filters can be helpful to remove particles from the air for those with heart and lung problems. If you have to go outside, wear a mask. I know you have at least one! (preferably a KN95 mask)
4. **Don't add to the pollution.** Don't smoke, burn candles, grill, light fireplaces. Avoid driving, mowing the lawn and getting gas for your car between 10am and 6pm. Don't stir up dust by vacuuming or dusting.

If you are interested in tracking the fires and the smoke, check out the following website.
www.airnow.app.cloud.gov Here's is a screenshot from today. (The blue dot is my house, so you know where the party will be when COVID is over!)

Be sure to take care of your lungs no matter how young or old, healthy or unhealthy you are. Our goal has always been preventative medicine and we want to teach our patients how to keep themselves healthy!



Questions for Dave and I

1. **Did you hear about the new treatment for COVID-19 I saw in the WSJ? I wanted to share!**

Thank you! There are currently 500 clinical trials in the world looking for an effective treatment for COVID-19. The Wall Street Journal featured one study, also published in the Lancet, that uses “medical signaling cells” or “MSCs,” which are normally found in blood vessels, to treat patients. It helps eliminate the virus, calm the immune system when it becomes over active, and repair damaged lung tissue. The cells are made by Mesoblast Ltd. So far, there's some promising data that they may reduce deaths in severely ill patients with COVID-19. It is still early in the clinical trial phases, but hopeful information is forever coming our way.

2. **Can I get a flu shot?**

You may be experiencing déjà vu, but this is very important. We will announce when flu shots become available via this newsletter. I suspect they will be here in about 4 weeks. EVERY ONE should get, unless you have a true allergic reaction and those folks (<5) know who they are. We don't want you getting COVID AND the flu at the same time! Also, it may become very difficult for us to diagnose the flu in the fall if there is another shortage of testing supplies.

It is time for me to take a long weekend respite, so next week's email may be delayed. You may hear more from Dave as he will be graciously returning all of our patient calls and messages.

Until next time,
Be well,

Jeannette and Dave

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