

Why You Need to Protect Your Brain from Wildfires

Unfortunately, wildfire smoke can now reach you wherever you live in the world. While the effects of wildfire smoke on the body are well publicized, we are just beginning to understand how bad it is for the brain too. Here's why wildfire smoke affects the mind and what you can do about it.

Why is Wildfire Smoke Different?

Like most types of smoke, wildfire smoke consists of water vapor, particulate matter (PM), carbon monoxide, and volatile organic compounds (VOC gases). The particulate matter in wildfire smoke may be more dangerous than other sources of PM.

How Does Wildfire Smoke Affect the Brain?

While wildfire smoke has some special features, it's likely that much of the danger is still due to the most common air quality concern, PM2.5 (airborne particles smaller than 2.5 microns). While scientists aren't quite certain why PM2.5 has such a strong effect on the brain, one possible culprit is inflammation. PM2.5 can penetrate the blood/brain barrier, causing an immune reaction.

Here are 4 ways to protect yourself from the effects of wildfire smoke.

1. Stay Indoors on Smoky Days

You can experience the effects of wildfire smoke even if the smoke itself isn't visible. The most dangerous particles are those too small to be detected by the naked eye, so check the Air Quality Index (AQI) in your area for guidance.

2. Adjust Ventilation

Staying indoors alone won't do it if your ventilation settings are wrong. For instance, many window ACs have a button that determines whether it is drawing air from outside or recycling air from the home. On hot, poor air quality days, you ought to set your AC so it cycles air from indoors rather than draws it from outside.

3. Use the Correct Mask

If you must go outdoors, using the right mask is key; a loose-fitting surgical mask won't cut it. According to Yale Medicine, "The best type of mask to wear for protection against wildfire smoke is a well-fitted N95 or P100 respirator with two straps that go around your head."

4. Get a Portable Air Purifier

Few homes are airtight; those that are near airtight need to bring in at least some outdoor air — no matter how bad the conditions outside. Since HVAC systems can be strained by high-grade filters, some wildfire smoke will inevitably infiltrate your home. This is where portable air purifiers come in.

Solving Wildfire Smoke Issues

As wildfire smoke continues to become more prevalent, it's vital that our indoor air be something we can trust. With abundant test results and happy customers across the globe, Aerus can establish that trust in your home.

