



28 Executive Drive, Norwalk, OH 44857 | 419-668-1652 | information@huroncohealth.com

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Contact:

Cyleen Sharpe, Public Information Officer
Huron County Public Health
28 Executive Drive
Norwalk, Ohio 44857
Phone: 419-668-1652, ext: 234
csharpe@huroncohealth.com

June 29, 2023

Air Quality Update in Huron County

NORWALK, Ohio—As of June 29, 2023, the state of Ohio, including Huron County, continues to be blanketed in smoke from wildfires in eastern Canada. HCPH has received several inquiries about the quality of the air due to the wildfire smoke and what potential restrictions should be put into place to protect residents' health.

Wildfire smoke contains "particle pollutants" or "particulate matter", which are extremely fine solids that can enter the eyes and respiratory system. The concentration of particulate matter is measured and scaled by the federal government's [Air Quality Index](#), which is broken down into six categories, as shown in the chart below. This chart provides a general guideline for the population to refer to. As of 6/29/2023, Huron County is categorized as "red" (see map below), meaning the air quality is "unhealthy." With a categorization of red, this means that some members of the general public may experience health effects and that members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects. Individuals with compromised immune systems (i.e., COPD, asthma, heart disease, lung disease), seniors and young children are especially at risk and are advised by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to limit outdoor activity until air quality levels return to a moderate or good level (see chart below). If you believe you may be more sensitive to particulates or air quality, you should consult with your physician regarding limiting activity outdoors and the need to take preventative measures.



Timothy Hollinger, MPH
Health Commissioner

Community Health Fax:
(419) 668-0152

Environmental Fax:
(567) 244-3201

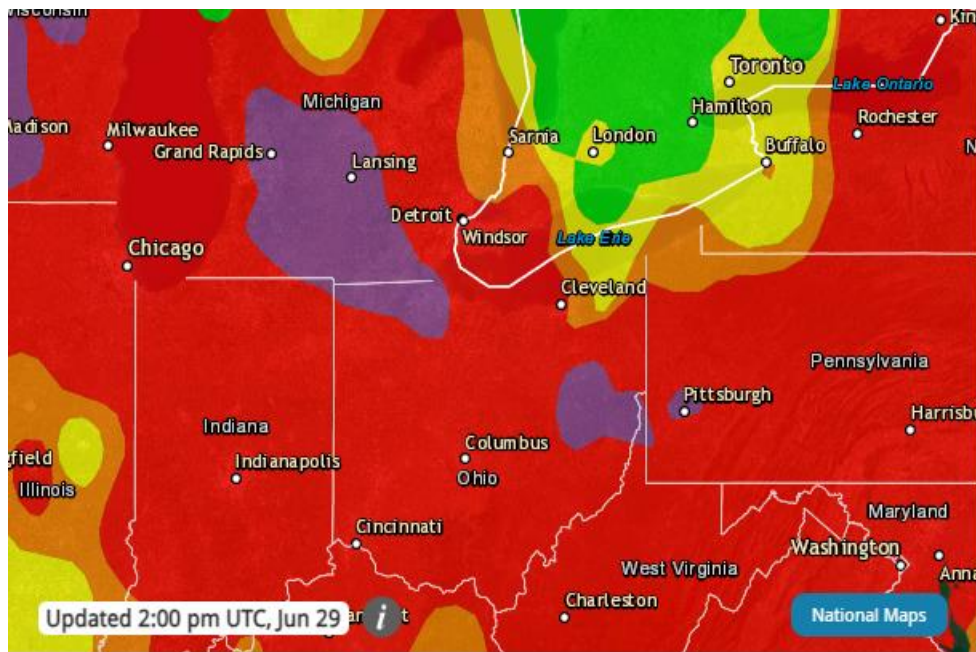
Medical Fax:
(419) 663-1809

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AQI Basics for Ozone and Particle Pollution

Daily AQI Color	Levels of Concern	Values of Index	Description of Air Quality
Green	Good	0 to 50	Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Yellow	Moderate	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Orange	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is less likely to be affected.
Red	Unhealthy	151 to 200	Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Purple	Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health alert: The risk of health effects is increased for everyone.
Maroon	Hazardous	301 and higher	Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected.



General precautions recommended by the ODH include:

1. Spend time in a room you can close off from outside air.
2. Avoid using candles, gas, propane, wood-burning stoves, fireplaces, and aerosol sprays. Smoking tobacco products and vacuuming may worsen indoor air pollution.
3. If you have a central air conditioning system, use high efficiency filters to capture fine particles from smoke. If your system has a fresh air intake, set the system to recirculate mode or close the outdoor intake damper.
4. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water. If your eyes, nose or throat are irritated, running a humidifier may provide some relief.

Additionally, those with asthma are encouraged to carefully follow your [asthma action plan](#), if you have one; and those with heart disease or COPD should pay close attention to symptoms such as chest pain or tightness, a fast heartbeat, feeling more out of breath than usual, or extreme fatigue. Contact your doctor if you experience these symptoms, or if symptoms are severe, dial 911.

At this time, Huron County Public Health is not recommending or mandating closures of any kind for businesses or community events in Huron County. Any business closures or event cancellations that have occurred are at the discretion of the individual facilities/events. Individuals are encouraged to check air quality levels at [AirNow.gov](#) before leaving home and to use this tool to make informed decisions based on their own personal health situation. Individuals with specific concerns regarding health conditions are encouraged to contact their primary care provider.

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