NJ Health
New Jersey Department of Health

Health Advisory

Key messages for health care providers: Ensure up-to-date Medical Management Plans/Asthma Action Plans are in place for patients at increased risk of health impacts from poor air quality days.

- Patients with asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), other lung diseases, heart disease, or who are pregnant, are at a higher risk of health impacts (such as respiratory impacts, cardiovascular events, and other adverse health outcomes) during poor air quality days.
- Proactive Care for Patients with Asthma: Create an Asthma Action Plan. Ensure all patients with asthma have a current, personalized Asthma Action Plan and that they know to keep quick-relief medication readily available, particularly during periods of wildfire smoke or high ozone.
- For patients with other pre-existing conditions (COPD, heart, disease, etc.), encourage patients to keep any relevant medications available in the event of poor air quality days, and if relevant, ensure patients have a medical management plan
- Advise Patients to monitor local AirNow.gov information and either follow recommendations based on the Air Quality Index (AQI), (document.airnow.gov/air-quality-guide-for-particle-pollution.pdf), or if necessary:
  - Make more conservative specific clinical recommendations for the patients in advance of poor AQ days (e.g. during wildfire impacts) and tailor them if the color-coded AQI recommendations are not protective enough.
  - For example, clinical guidance may be more conservative for patients to remain indoors or leave the area on days with AQI>100 when public health recommendation is not as restrictive.
- Advise patients to take protective actions, which include these steps:
  - Patients should stay indoors with windows and doors closed and use air conditioning (with fresh-air intake closed and a clean filter) or air purifiers
    - Prevent further indoor air pollution by not smoking, using candles, sprays, or vacuuming
    - People who must be outside, or if it is not possible to avoid exposure to wildfire smoke, can have some protection using an N95 mask if worn properly.
    - Advise limiting, shifting, or canceling outdoor, high-exertion activities.

Quick Facts about Poor Air Quality

- Based on a color-coded scale from 0 to 300, the U.S. Air Quality Index (AQI) is a tool used to communicate information about outdoor air quality and health.
- Poor air quality is caused by air pollution, high ozone days, wildfire events, and extreme heat.
- These air quality impacts can occur quickly and without warning.
- **Make plans in advance to prevent health impacts and reduce unnecessary visits ahead of poor air quality days.**