

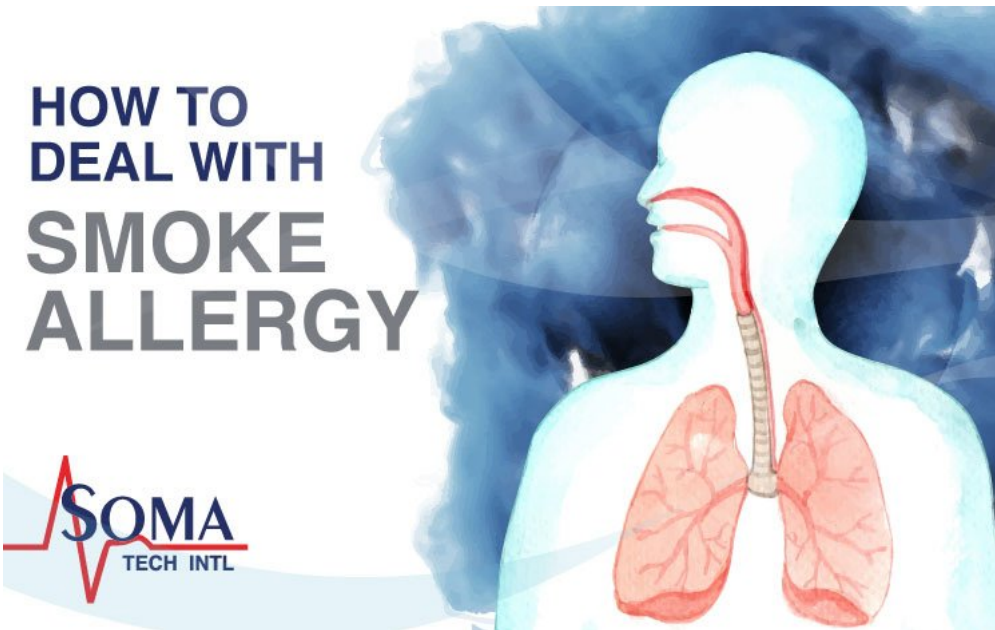
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How To Deal With Smoke Allergy



ALLERGY TO SMOKE

When smoke levels or other indoor or outdoor respiratory irritants are high, even healthy people can experience health problems due to smoke allergy symptoms. It's important to understand how these irritants can affect your health, including who is most susceptible to allergic reactions. How do these effects interact with conditions like asthma or allergies? How to deal with a smoke allergy? Let's look closely to answer some of these questions, which in turn will help us better understand what health precautions we need to take.

PARTICULATE MATTER IN WILDFIRE SMOKE

The particulate component of wood smoke is made up of particles of varying sizes, based on the material being burned and the temperature it's burned at. Wildfires introduce a massive amount of particulate pollutants into the air, estimated to be more than urban pollution. The size of the particles is important because smaller particles stay in the air longer, and therefore are dispersed over longer distances and wider areas.

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Fine (under 2.5 microns) and ultrafine (under 1 micron) particles are of special concern because particles that small can enter the lungs and become lodged in the tissue there, causing damage to the surrounding cells. When particles this small enter the lungs, they cause an inflammatory response that can extend from the surrounding cells to systemic inflammation. Resulting in greater susceptibility to infections. These are some reasons why there is an increased demand for respirators amongst hospital centers and medical facilities worldwide.

WOOD SMOKE ALLERGY SYMPTOMS

The immediate short-term effects, regardless of sensitivity, are burning eyes, nose, and throat, watery eyes, runny nose, coughing, and shortness of breath. Your body may produce extra phlegm in response to inhaling smoke. These symptoms are, in part, your body attempting to expel particles by washing them away. In addition, phlegm traps particles before they can reach your lungs. Even healthy adults may experience an inflammatory response of wheezing or restricted breathing.

People with asthma may have breathing difficulties in everyday air. The irritation caused by inhaling smoke can trigger asthma symptoms, including shortness of breath, constricted chest, wheezing, inability to draw deep breaths, and chest pain. People with allergies may have an allergic reaction to something in the wood smoke. However, the symptoms of an allergic reaction are virtually identical to the other short-term symptoms of inhaling smoke. Those symptoms may be worse than they would be for someone without allergies. Repeated exposures to wood smoke have been found to cause an allergic sensitization of the respiratory system. However, this is more likely in someone like a firefighter who battles wildfires than someone who experiences wildfire smoke infrequently.

HOW TO DEAL WITH SMOKE ALLERGY

Allergy and asthma sufferers can take several steps to decrease the impact of wildfire smoke:

- Keep track of air quality ratings in your area to assess risk.
- Minimize exposure by staying indoors as much as possible.
- Protect your indoor air quality by keeping windows and doors closed.
- Don't burn candles, vacuum, or use aerosol sprays—they're all sources of indoor pollution.
- If your home has air conditioning or a high-efficiency particulate air filter, use it.
- Avoid unnecessary exercise or exertion, both indoors and out.
- If you do go out, reduce indoor pollution by showering and changing clothes when you return.
- If you use a rescue inhaler, keep one on hand.
- Pay close attention to symptoms and seek medical help at the first sign of trouble.

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FIRE SMOKE ALLERGY TREATMENT

Treatments for smoke allergy during the winter include:

- Antihistamines, which reduce sneezing, sniffing, and itching
- Decongestants, which clear mucus to relieve congestion and swelling
- Immunotherapy (allergy shots or under-the-tongue tablets), which expose your body to gradually bigger doses of the allergen. This approach can curb your symptoms for a longer period of time than allergy drugs.

FINAL THOUGHT

To conclude, many people believe that as the spring and fall seasons wrap, so do their allergies. But the truth is that they are mistaken. While the onslaught of colder weather and freezing temperatures bring an end to seasonal pollen allergies, it doesn't mean that your environment is free of allergens. This winter be sure that when bringing in any firewood into the home that it's been cleaned and checked for mold. In addition, when starting any fire, make sure that the chimney damper is open so that no unwanted smoke comes into the home.

The best way for a person to handle smoke allergies is also the simplest: understand what triggers the symptoms and control them with avoidance. For now, make sure to stay safe and stay warm this holiday season!

Did you enjoy reading this article? Do you have any smoke or other winter-related allergies? What do you normally do to deal with the symptoms? Leave a comment below!



December 18, 2020

8 Comments



Daniela

February 20, 2021 at 9:18 am

REPLY

That would be helpful for one whose neighbors all around them in a dense area weren't burning their fireplaces. If a person has a wood allergy, the last thing they need to be doing is burning wood or bringing it into their house. Also, have some consideration for others that live by you -opening your flue so you don't breathe it in

is great -but what about your neighbors? People need to take action with the government to stop this wood burning!!!!



Donna Smith

REPLY

September 26, 2021 at 12:47 pm

I agree with you 100 percent. I've worked with our air pollution control district to no avail because our fire departments are pro burning in my community and they pushed back on any regulations! Total bumner because I live in CA and most of the people burn because they like a fire not out of financial need.

I'm allergic to sulfur and when wood burns this gas is released.

Totally changes my life!!



Terry

REPLY

December 15, 2021 at 12:00 pm

100% in agreement! It is immoral to poison others with filthy wood-burning practices and must be made illegal.

Many are suffering, but attitudes and beliefs are twisted by propaganda from the wood-burning industry. E.V.I.L!!!!

It is good to know we are not alone in this fight. There is strength in numbers; let us all resist as a United Front. Bless You, Sister!



wanda

REPLY

September 24, 2021 at 9:46 pm

People burn wood for heat and have done so for ages. That's what fireplaces were built for. People need to take action and make sure other people do not disturb their rights as free Americans, You can move!

**Lori****REPLY**

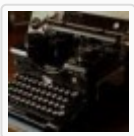
October 5, 2021 at 3:59 pm

I agree with Wanda. We burn wood because it's less expensive than gas or electricity and we like to eat AND stay warm. In the area in which we live, it's more common than not. I'm sorry that it's hard on some, but it would be harder on us to have to pay for our heat.

**L.A.****REPLY**

October 30, 2021 at 3:07 am

Same situation. I am surrounded by neighbors that burn wood in wood stoves for heat. Additionally, now everyone wants, and has, a fire pit. Just when the weather gets cooler and all the leaves are changing colors everybody wants a fire. For me, all I have to do is smell a hint of smoke-any type (wood, cigarette, pot, incense), or perfume, laundry detergent, diesel fuel, cleaning products and I have an instant headache. What kind of life is this? Due to Covid19, I realized that if I keep my filtration mask on when outdoors it cuts down on the smoke I breathe in. Now I'm the person that is wearing a mask while walking my dog in the woods with no-one around. Maybe it will scare the bears away.

**judy t****REPLY**

December 25, 2021 at 8:26 pm

we burn wood all winter. It's cheaper than oil, and less wasteful of non renewable resources. I have developed a relatively vigorous reaction to wood smoke, but wearing glasses and a mask reduces the sneezing and sniffing. It 's the price we pay for being wood burners.

I think there is enough legislation on the books already that infringe on our rights.



Claire Heffernan

REPLY

March 26, 2022 at 9:20 pm

I am in a pitched battle with my husband over the wood stove. He has no clue about allergies to wood smoke and ash. He comes in opens the stove up, rakes the ash and then leaves the door open slightly so the GD fire will catch. Meanwhile, my eyes are burning, I cough, I sneeze, sore throat. I am getting to the point where I cannot stand the smell of wood smoke. I have to clean this stupid ash that settles all over the furniture and floors. Wear glasses! I already wear glasses. I open the windows, he comes in and closes the windows. For anyone who doesn't react to wood smoke, it's not about rights and freedoms. What a stupid response. It is about being UNcomfortable the entire time the fire is going. God only knows what it is doing to my lungs. And he keeps putting wood on at night when it is now warm at night. It is f'king awful. I designed and built this house and I paid for most of it and now I have to fight every day about this toxic wood stove. I've had the chimney cleaned three times in the last two years and two new chimney caps @ \$100 a pop because there is so much tar in the cap. Nearly impossible to clean. And the wood is seasoned and dry. I want to get rid of this 300 pound piece of junk.

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