Personal Wildfire Resilience

Best Practices for Managing Stress, Smoke and Ash from Wildfires

Let's face it, living in a fire ecology can be very stressful. Self-care practices are essential to build our resilience.

- Take time to rest and recover
- Deeply nourish your body with nutrient-dense foods like broths, soups, dark greens, fresh vegetables and fruits. Eat fermented foods for probiotic support.
- Avoid inflammatory foods and drinks like sugar, alcohol, fried foods, and factory-farmed meats and dairy
- Even if you are confined indoors, find ways to move your body and stretch. Put on some music and dance or shake it off.
- Practice Mind-Body Medicine techniques like breathing exercises, meditation, movement, creativity – check out these resources from socoresilience.org
- Seek out support from family, friends, local organizations, and mental health care professionals

When our region experiences fire, smoke and ash reach far beyond the fire's footprint; we'd like to remind you of some best practices to help reduce exposure to smoke and ash:

- Keep children and pets indoors as much as possible
- If possible, keep your windows closed and run a HEPA air purifier in your home. Move the HEPA air purifier into your sleep space at night.
- Before going out, check the air quality at airnow.gov or purpleair.com (be sure the PM setting is
- If you must go out, protect your lungs with a mask - N95 or N100 are recommended. (Please note that an N95 mask with a valve to aide exhalation is not recommended to prevent the spread of COVID-19. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, cover your N95 mask with a fabric covering or change masks when indoors)
- When you return home, remove your shoes before entering your home and change your clothes and put them in the laundry
- Before going to bed, remove your day clothes, bathe or shower and wash your hair thoroughly to remove ash

Even when the air has cleared, you'll want to take care of lingering toxics. Here are some best practices for cleaning smoke and ash in your home and car:

- Sweep and vacuum often. Vacuum floors and fabric furniture well and often (HEPA vacuum recommended).
- Wet mop hard floors and wet dust surfaces to remove ash and dust, then clean with an all-natural cleaning solution. Microfiber cloths are best for collecting ash and dust.
- Avoid toxic cleaners (such as bleach) as they can further compromise your lungs and health.
- After the fires are out, replace the air filters in your home and car.