

How to stay safe when the air quality is affected from wildfires in Canada drifted to the northeast U.S.

(Source information from Council Member Erik Bottcher NYC District 3, AOC and Mount Sinai Hospital).

Summary:

Although now the air quality in the New York area is getting better but it's not the best yet, at least until Monday 06/12/23, it's good to know what to do when we get poor air quality.

The City of New York and U.S Environmental Protection Agency recommends the following steps to limit health risks as a result of the reduced air quality:

- People with heart or breathing problems and children and older adults are in high risk and should avoid outdoor activities during this time.
- All New Yorkers should limit outdoor activity and stay inside with the doors and windows closed when possible.
- If you need to be outside, wear a high-quality mask (e.g. N95 or KN95), surgical mask won't protect you. (Dr Linda Rogers MD-Mount Sinai). Have a supply of N95 masks and learn how to use them.
- Whether you have a central air conditioning system or a room unit, use **high efficiency filters** to capture fine particles from smoke. Ask an air conditioning professional what type of high efficiency filter your air conditioner can accept.
- Seek shelter elsewhere if you do not have an air conditioner and it is too warm to stay inside with the windows closed.
- Do not add to indoor air pollution. Do not burn candles or use gas, propane, wood burning stoves, fireplaces, or aerosol sprays. Do not fry or broil meat, smoke tobacco products, or vacuum. All of these can increase air pollution indoors.
- Use a portable air cleaner to reduce indoor air pollution. Make sure it is sized for the room and that it does not make ozone, which is a harmful air pollutant. Portable air cleaners can be used along with efficient central air systems with efficient filters to maximize the reduction of indoor particles.
- Create a "clean room" in your home. Choose a room with no fireplace and as few windows and doors as possible, such as a bedroom. Use a portable air cleaner in the room.
- Long-term smoke events usually have periods when the air is better. When air quality improves, even temporarily, air out your home to reduce indoor air pollution.

A good score for quality air is less than 50, when it gets over 50 maybe risky for sensitive people. (To check air quality website [AirNow.gov](https://www.airnow.gov).)



Please be sure to check in on vulnerable neighbors and take precautions to keep friends, family, neighbors, and yourself safe.

This is yet another wake-up call to humanity about the need to take urgent action to address climate change.

Stay safe!

By Claudia Canasto (Beloved Earth Community)