

# How can I protect my health?

## Wood smoke, air quality and your health

All Tasmanians should minimise their exposure to wood smoke, wherever possible. This is especially important for people who are more susceptible to the health effects of smoke, including:

- those who have a chronic disease, especially heart disease or a lung condition such as asthma, chronic bronchitis and emphysema
- babies, very young children and the elderly.

### PLAN AHEAD

Before winter sets in, or if there is a planned burn in your area, talk to your doctor about what steps you can take to protect yourself and your family. Only your doctor can advise you about your specific health situation.

- If you are asthmatic, it is important to have an asthma management plan developed by your doctor in conjunction with yourself. Make sure you have your blue/grey reliever with you at all times.
- If you have or could have heart disease, be prepared and learn the warning signs of heart attack. Go to [heartattackfacts.org.au](http://heartattackfacts.org.au) or call the Heart Foundation on 1300 36 27 87.

### What do I do if it's smoky outside?

#### REST UP

Avoid doing physical activity in the outdoors as exercise causes more of the smaller particles to be breathed deeply into the lungs. People with pre-existing heart or lung conditions in particular, should rest as much as possible and stay away from the smoke.

#### STAY INDOORS

- Close windows and doors when indoors to slow the rate of penetration of smoke.
- Switch your air conditioner to 'recycle' or 'recirculate' to reduce smoke coming inside your home. Most air conditioners contain filters that will remove particles from the indoor air, helping to maintain cleaner air.
- When indoors, minimise other sources of air pollution such as cigarette smoke, burning candles, using unflued gas appliances or woodstoves, and avoid stirring up fine dust from sweeping or vacuuming.
- If your home gets too hot to be comfortable or is letting in smoky air from the outside, try to relieve your exposure by taking a break in a cleaner air environment, such as a friend's place, the local library, shopping centre, or sports centre.
- If there is a break in smoky conditions, take the opportunity to open windows and air out your home to improve the indoor air quality.

#### KNOW WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

Those on medication should continue to take their medications as usual.

If you are having difficulty breathing or think you are experiencing warning signs of a heart attack, call Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance immediately.