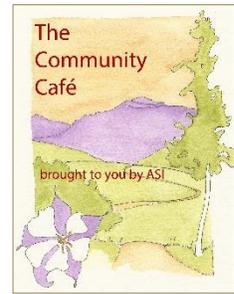


## PRESS RELEASE

For release: July 18, 2021  
Pagosa Springs, CO



## NEWS FROM THE COMMUNITY CAFÉ

### Protecting Your Health on Smoky Days (and Nights)

Protecting our family members, animals, homes, and businesses is top of list for everyone in wildfire prone areas. This year, we have been experiencing some very poor air quality days due to fires that are far afield from us here in Southern Colorado. We can't protect ourselves from all the effects of smoke, but we can learn more and take better care of ourselves.

People who are generally healthy may not feel much from smoke, but over a period of days the impact may range from sore throat to shortness of breath. Those who already have compromised lung capacity may experience impacts early on. Knowing what the conditions really are can help us be proactive about taking the precautions that will help us feel our best on any given day.

**Understand your risk level.** Monitoring the air quality is a good place to start. Knowing what constitutes a “dangerous” level can help you make better decisions. “Like air pollution, wildfire smoke — and particularly the concentration of PM 2.5, or particles smaller than 2.5 microns — can affect the respiratory and cardiovascular systems,” [said Colleen Reid](#), an environmental epidemiologist and health geographer at the University of Colorado Boulder.

A number of online resources provide real-time readings. Both sites below include local air quality data from the Colorado Air Pollution Control Division (APCD) sensor located in Pagosa Springs with recommendations on what those levels may mean for your risk category.

- The EPA's site: <https://fire.airnow.gov/#>
- Purple Air: <https://www2.purpleair.com/>

### Healthcare tips.

- *During poor quality times, stay indoors, keep windows and doors closed, and turn on a fan to generate some air flow and negative pressure to help keep smoke from filtering in through small cracks.*
- *If possible, use a HEPA filter indoors.*
- *Use a properly fitted N95 mask when outdoors to help out filter smoke and any damaging particles.*
- *Use good sense – match your activity level to the day. If you can smell smoke or it is visibly smoky and hot outside, then heavy physical activity is probably not a great idea.*
- *In some weather fronts, the smoke holds close to the ground at night and then clears off during the warmer daytime hours. In other cases, the smoke dissipates at night and then accumulates more during daylight hours. Look at monitor trends – you can open windows during those times that are trending cleaner to improve air circulation and cool down your space. If you have a two-story set up, opening a lower level window slightly and one or more upper windows more widely will give you the best air flow.*

**Helping Others.** You can take the precautions above to help yourself and still help others. If you are able to get out but know of a neighbor or a friend who has challenges when the air quality is poor, you can offer to run errands, walk their dog, or water their garden.

Our website provides information about ASI programs in Archuleta County and contact information for making reservations at The Community Café for take-out and for Meals on Wheels at: <http://www.psseniors.org/>.

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