



## FACT SHEET

# Long-Term Wildfire Recovery: Restoring Your Wellbeing

Recovering from a disaster like a wildfire can feel overwhelming. People who live near areas affected by fire may have questions about air and water quality. They also might have other concerns about the effect of the fire around their home and communities. Here are tips to protect yourself as your community recovers. It's important to take care of your physical and mental health during these times and reach out for help when you need it.

### Check-in with a health care provider.

- Take care of any ongoing health conditions. Work with your health care provider to regain regular access to prescription medications and inhalers.
- Continue with preventive care visits, such as well-child checkups, on a regular basis.
- If you have heart or lung disease, check with your health care provider before you start any post-fire clean-up. Discuss whether a respirator (such as an N95) is right for you and if so, how to use one.
- If you feel sick, talk to your health care provider. Let them know if you have concerns about exposure to ash and fire debris. Health care providers who need consultation can contact:
  - [Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units \(PEHSU\)](#) for children
  - The [Oregon Poison Center](#) 1-800-222-1222 for all age groups

### Take care of your emotional and mental health.

Take time to connect with others. Keep in contact with friends and family. Share your feelings and concerns with a friend or family member. **You don't have to recover from a disaster by yourself.**

- Take breaks. Get back to activities you normally enjoy. Make time to unwind. Remind yourself strong feelings will fade away.
- If you are having trouble coping, you are not alone. There are resources and support to give you and those you love comfort and care. Find ways to take care of yourself and get help with [Safe+Strong](#), a free community resource.

- [Connect with this link](#) to get any of the following help:
  - Counselors
  - Local county resources
  - Support groups
  - Federal disaster aid

If you need to talk the Safe + Strong helpline is here for you. [Call 1-800-923-HELP \(4357\)](#).

- Call 211 to speak with a person if you need help with any of the following:
  - Locating mental health resources
  - Talking through a problem
  - Exploring mental health treatment options

## Nourish your body with healthy foods high in antioxidants.

- Some exposures are out of anyone's control. However, we can use nutrition to help stay healthy. It can also protect against some negative effects of breathing polluted air.
- Foods high in the following nutrients can protect our lungs and heart from damage from many kinds of air pollution, which includes smoke:
  - [Vitamin A](#)
  - [Vitamin C](#)
  - [Vitamin E](#)
  - [Omega-3 fatty acids](#)

Dark leafy greens, orange or yellow fruits and vegetables, fish, nuts and seeds are examples of good sources. Some studies show that people with diets rich in these foods were not affected as badly as those not eating them.

- You can help decrease the amount of any heavy metals in ash that your body absorbs by eating a diet with enough of the following:
  - Iron
  - Calcium
  - Zinc

Beans, dairy and whole grains are examples of good sources.

## Know how to get correct information.

Get statewide and local information on wildfire recovery efforts and emergency notifications through [www.wildfire.oregon.gov](http://www.wildfire.oregon.gov). The site also contains community resources on:

- [Oregon Wildfire Response & Recovery](#)
- [Ash and debris removal updates](#)
- [Oregon Smoke Information](#)

- **Wildfires and smoke preparedness**

It's important to stay informed. However, sometimes too much news about a disaster isn't a good thing. Hearing or seeing images of a stressful event over and over can make people more anxious. Find a balance between staying informed and watching or reading too much news. It's OK to take breaks.

## Links:

Oregon Health Authority Long-Term Wildfire Recovery: Contaminants of Concern for Your Health  
<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le3864c.pdf>

Oregon Health Authority Long-Term Wildfire Recovery: Healthy home advice  
<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le3864a.pdf>

Healthy home advice Ash and debris removal updates: <https://wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup>

Free mental health helpline **1-800-923-HELP (4357)**: <https://www.linesforlife.org/obhsl/>

Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSU): <https://www.pehsu.net/region10.html>

Omega fatty-3 acids information: <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Omega3FattyAcids-Consumer/>

Oregon Health Authority's Wildfire and Smoke Information: [www.healthoregon.org/wildfires](http://www.healthoregon.org/wildfires)

Oregon Poison Center: <https://www.ohsu.edu/oregon-poison-center>

Oregon Smoke Information: <https://oregonsmoke.blogspot.com/>

Oregon Wildfire Response & Recovery: <https://wildfire.oregon.gov/>

Ways to Take Care (mental and physical): <https://www.safestrongoregon.org/mental-and-emotional-health/signs-symptoms-self-care-sub/ways-to-take-care>

Vitamin A information: <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminA-HealthProfessional/>

Vitamin C information: <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminC-HealthProfessional/>

Vitamin E information: <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminE-HealthProfessional/>

Oregon Health Authority's Wildfire and Smoke Information: [www.healthoregon.org/wildfires](http://www.healthoregon.org/wildfires)