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**For Immediate Release**

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**Health Advisory**

This health advisory is being issued by the Public Health Department to respond to resident concerns about widespread smoke seen in parts of Sullivan County as a result of area fires.

The smoke released by any type of fire (forest, brush, crop, structure, tires, waste or wood burning) is a mixture of particles and chemicals produced by incomplete burning of carbon-containing materials. Exposure to high levels of smoke should be avoided.

Individuals are advised to limit their physical exertion if exposure to high levels of smoke cannot be avoided. Individuals with cardiovascular or respiratory conditions (e.g., asthma), pregnant women, infants, young children, and the elderly may be more vulnerable to the health effects of smoke exposure.

Inhaling smoke for a short time can cause immediate (acute) effects. Smoke is irritating to the eyes, nose, and throat, and its odor may be nauseating. Some people exposed to heavy smoke have temporary changes in lung function, which makes breathing more difficult. Two of the major agents in smoke that can cause health effects are carbon monoxide gas and very small particles.

Inhaling carbon monoxide decreases the body's oxygen supply. This can cause headaches, reduce alertness, and aggravate a heart condition known as angina. Inhaling fine particles can cause a variety of health effects, including respiratory irritation and shortness of breath, and can worsen medical conditions such as asthma and heart disease.

During increased physical exertion, cardiovascular effects can be worsened by exposure to carbon monoxide and particulate matter. Once exposure stops, symptoms from inhaling carbon monoxide or fine particles generally diminish, but may last for a couple of days.

Anyone with persisting or frequent symptoms that they think are associated with smoke exposure should see their health care provider. Residents who have respiratory conditions or medical conditions that may be exposed to area smoke from fires are urged to stay indoors.

For more information go to:

[http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/air/smoke\\_from\\_fire.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/air/smoke_from_fire.htm)  
[http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/air/what\\_to\\_know.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/air/what_to_know.htm)

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