

# BUSHFIRES

## LIVING WITH ASTHMA & ALLERGY



Bushfire season is time to be on high alert for asthma symptoms

### FIRST AID FOR ASTHMA

If asthma symptoms occur, don't delay:

- Follow your personal written asthma action plan
- If you don't have an action plan, take 4 separate puffs of a blue/grey reliever
- If the symptoms aren't going away or are getting worse, then follow the steps in *First Aid for Asthma*

You can download the *First Aid for Asthma* and the *Kids' First Aid for Asthma* at:

[www.nationalasthma.org.au](http://www.nationalasthma.org.au)

## ASTHMA MANAGEMENT IN THE BUSHFIRE SEASON

For people with asthma living in high risk bushfire zones, the bushfire season is time to be on high alert for asthma symptoms. Smoke and increased air pollution from fires can trigger asthma symptoms, as can high emotions such as stress and anxiety.

### BE AWARE OF THE RISK

Bushfire smoke and debris can trigger asthma symptoms such as wheezing, breathlessness, coughing or chest tightness.

If you have asthma, or if you are responsible for a child or elderly person with asthma, be aware of the risk and the fact that these triggers can linger long after the actual bushfire threat has subsided.

This is also critically important for the many hundreds of volunteers, emergency personnel and media representatives working within the fire zones.

People in areas not directly impacted by the bushfires, including built-up areas, are also at risk as winds can carry smoke and ash particles long distances.

Try to reduce exposure to smoke by staying indoors with the doors and windows closed, doing as little outdoor activity as possible and using re-circulated air in the car.

### ASTHMA BUSHFIRE PLAN

Anyone with asthma living in a high risk bushfire zone should include asthma management in their fire safety survival plan:

- Keep your reliever handy at all times
- Make sure you have plenty of asthma medication available to you
- If you decide to evacuate make sure your reliever and other medications go with you
- Always follow your personal Asthma Action Plan

### FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Increased presentations for asthma should be expected around fire zones and in other areas affected by smoke haze.

General practices and pharmacies around these areas should ensure they have good supplies of reliever medications and spacers, particularly for emergency use.