



Exposure to smoke from Rural Fires – Protective measures

The General Directorate of Health (DGS) has previously warned of the risks associated with exposure to smoke from forest fires, which have devastated the country, and urged people to stay at home.

In a bulletin in 2018 it stated: "Smoke from fires has high levels of particulate matter and toxins that can have respiratory, cardiovascular and ophthalmological effects, among others. Main symptoms include eye, nose and throat irritation, persistent cough, shortness of breath, pain or tightness in the chest and fatigue".

The effects of fires can be most felt on pregnant women, children, patients with breathing problems and patients with heart problems, outdoor workers, firefighters and the population involved.

Among the pollutants emitted by fires are particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide.

In order to protect populations against the main effects of smoke from fires, DGS recommends:

- Use suitable particle filtration masks, especially for those who need to remain outside, or to protect the mouth and nose with wet wipes;
- Stay indoors and keep doors and windows tightly closed, reducing air intake from outside. If necessary, seal the windows with wet cloths;
- Should the situation worsens, the most sensitive groups should be evacuated to equipped with air conditioning systems if possible;
- Reduce physical activity;
- Restrict the use of tobacco.
- After fires maintain the use of damp masks or wipes in ash cleaning operations inside and outside buildings;

ANEPC advice if surrounded by a fire is to breathe close to the ground, if possible with a wet cloth, to avoid inhaling smoke

For more information, the DGS requests that you call SNS 24 (808 24 24 24) or consult the website of the service www.dgs.pt, reminding that in case of emergency to call 112.

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