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## HEALTH DEPARTMENT WARNS OF RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH EASTERN BAY COUNTY FIRES



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**Panama City, Fla.** – The Florida Department of Health is urging residents to take precautions against drifting smoke associated with fires burning in eastern Bay County.

Drifting smoke can cause coughing, scratchy throat, irritated sinuses, shortness of breath, chest pain, headaches, stinging eyes and runny nose. If you have heart or lung disease, smoke might make your symptoms worse. People who have heart disease might experience chest pain, rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath and fatigue.

Smoke may worsen symptoms for people who have pre-existing respiratory conditions, such as respiratory allergies, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in the following ways: inability to breathe normally, cough with or without mucus, chest discomfort, wheezing and shortness of breath. Residents are advised to contact their doctor with any concerns.

Residents are advised to limit their exposure to the smoke by:

- Staying indoors whenever possible
- Using air conditioners (air-conditioned homes usually have lower air exchange rates than homes that use open windows for ventilation)
- Using mechanical air cleaners
- Keeping windows closed while driving in a vehicle
- Minimizing other sources of air pollution (smoking tobacco, burning candles or incense and vacuuming)

Air quality is monitored by the Department of Environmental Protection, more information is available at:

[http://www.dep.state.fl.us/Air/air\\_quality/monitoring.htm](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/Air/air_quality/monitoring.htm).

### About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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