



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Idaho Public Health Districts

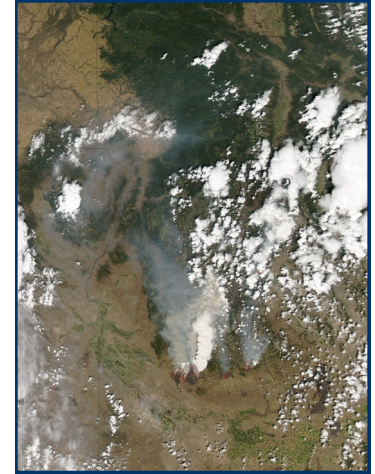
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October 2013

Wildfires and Smoke

The 2013 wildfire season arrived during a summer marked by high temperatures and tinder dry conditions. More than 1,100 fires burned a combined total of 675,000 acres, or 1,053 square miles, an area roughly the size of the state of Rhode Island.

Where there's fire, there's smoke, and the Idaho wildfires produced a lot of it. In mid-August, NASA snapped a picture from space of the massive wildfires that would threaten Ketchum and Sun Valley. The image shows miles-long plumes of smoke blanketing central Idaho's mountains. Smoke does more than simply obscure views and darken otherwise blue skies. It makes breathing difficult for those with respiratory conditions like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), even if they live miles from where the fires are burning. When smoke levels are high enough, even healthy people have trouble breathing.



Federal, state, county, public health and tribal agencies pooled their resources this year to create a one-stop-shop for information on wildfire smoke. The Idaho Smoke Blog (www.idsmoke.blogspot.com) provides citizens with real time information on air quality, where fires are burning, and tips on staying healthy during wildfire season. In August, at the height of wildfire season, the website saw nearly 27,000 visits.

Influenza (Flu)

Influenza, commonly know as the flu, is a contagious virus that causes respiratory illness. It shows up in some form annually, causing mild to severe illness and sometimes leading to death. Health officials advise an annual flu vaccination for everyone six months of age and older, ideally by October. Flu season typically runs from October to May and peaks in January and February.

Between 135 and 139 million doses of flu vaccine are in production for the 2013-2014 U.S. flu season. Several flu vaccine options are available, and people should talk to their immunization provider about the option best for them.

The people at greatest risk for complications from the flu are:

- young children,
- pregnant women,
- anyone with chronic conditions such as asthma or diabetes, and
- seniors.

The most effective preventions are:

- the flu vaccine,
- avoiding close contact with sick people,
- washing your hands well and often, and
- disinfecting commonly touched surfaces such as doorknobs.

If you catch the flu, avoid spreading germs by:

- Staying home,
- Covering your coughs and sneezes,
- Washing your hands often and well, and
- Taking antiviral drugs if your doctor prescribes them.

Idaho's public health districts play a key role in protecting adults and children from the flu by providing flu vaccinations each year.

HEALTHY PEOPLE IN HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

PANHANDLE HEALTH DISTRICT (1)	PUBLIC HEALTH - IDAHO NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT (2)	SOUTHWEST DISTRICT HEALTH (3)	CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH (4)	SOUTH CENTRAL PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT (5)	SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO PUBLIC HEALTH (6)	EASTERN IDAHO PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT (7)
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