

# KNOW YOUR COLORS – Protect Your Health During California State Fires Season

Health Plan of San Joaquin wants everybody to KNOW YOUR COLORS when it comes to air quality and California's fire season. Fire season smoke is dangerous. Following is valuable information on how to stay healthy and safe during our fire season. The source is AirNow.gov at [www.airnow.gov/](http://www.airnow.gov/).

Particle pollution (from California fires) is composed of microscopic solids or liquid droplets that are so small that they can get deep into the lungs and cause serious health problems. When exposed to these small particles, people with heart or lung diseases and older adults are more at risk of hospital and emergency room visits or, in some cases, even death from heart or lung disease. Even if you are healthy, you may experience temporary symptoms from exposure to elevated levels of particles. Symptoms may include irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, phlegm, chest tightness, and shortness of breath. At greatest risk from particle

pollution are people with heart or lung disease, older adults (possibly because they may have undiagnosed heart or lung disease), and children. Find more information for your health and safety at AirNow. There is even a color-coded app for your computer and smart phone, so you can track the air quality in your area. AirNow is a partnership of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Park Service, NASA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and tribal, state, and local air quality agencies.

Health Plan of San Joaquin (HPSJ) Members are encouraged to keep in touch with their HPSJ provider, our helpful Customer Service representatives, or HealthReach 24/7, the advice nurse/physician line for HPSJ.

**HOW PEOPLE CAN PROTECT THEMSELVES, AND OTHERS.** Between the smoke generated by California fires, and the effects of COVID-19

Air Quality Index (AQI) Values	Levels of Health Concern	Colors
<i>When the AQI is in this range:</i>	<i>...air quality conditions are:</i>	<i>...as symbolized by this color:</i>
0 to 50	Good	Green
51 to 100	Moderate	Yellow
101 to 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Orange
151 to 200	Unhealthy	Red
201 to 300	Very Unhealthy	Purple
301 to 500	Hazardous	Maroon

and Flu on respiratory health, it is good to remember we are not defenseless. HPSJ's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Lakshmi Dhanvanthari says: "We are all in this together. Every person has a role to play. Your actions save lives." Until there is a vaccination for COVID-19, Dr. Lakshmi's advice is, "Protect yourself and the people close to you, it's simple and powerful," including being

a role model with these simple steps": Wear a face cover whenever you are out, Wash your hands, a lot, Keep AT LEAST 6 feet apart from all you do not live with, and, since we do have a flu vaccine – and it can take two weeks to provide protection – Get a Flu shot NOW! NEW for Members – Now get your flu shot from ANY HPSJ doctor's office or drugstore.