

# PREGNANCY AND WILDFIRES

## Tips to Minimize Risks

Exposure to wildfires can affect health in pregnancy at any stage. Studies link wildfire smoke exposure to preterm birth (babies born too early), low birth weight (babies born too small), and high blood pressure. There are steps you can take to minimize risks to you and your baby's health before, during, and after a wildfire.

### Before a Wildfire: Be Prepared

- Keep quality face masks for protection against smoke and other toxins in the air (e.g. N95s or P100). If you have young children, have KN95 masks ready for them. Masks should be worn whenever you see ash or smell smoke.
- Make a plan with your provider on where you can get prenatal care or deliver your baby if your doctor's office/hospital is closed. Prepare a delivery plan in the event you're asked to evacuate. Ask your provider for a copy of your prenatal records.
- Be aware of the signs of labor and early labor.
- Stock up on 7-10 days' worth of prescription medicines and prenatal vitamins.
- Prepare and keep a bag with essential items and supplies for both parent(s) and baby (e.g. clothing, toiletries, medical records and insurance information).
- Buy dry food that doesn't require cooking and at least 3-day supply of water (1 gallon a day per person).



### During a Wildfire

- Follow all evacuation warnings and orders. If you experience trouble breathing, consider evacuating for your safety, even if not required.
- Check air quality reports daily to avoid inhaling toxins and follow health department or provider instructions about outdoor safety for vulnerable populations. While you are pregnant, you are considered vulnerable.
- Stay inside as much as possible. Keep windows and doors closed and use filtered heating/AC systems to recirculate air in your living space. Use an air purifier when available.
- Wear an N95 or P100 face mask if you must be outside or in poorly ventilated indoor areas.
- If you go to an evacuation site, make sure on-site staff know that you are pregnant.
- Continue with your prenatal care. Follow your healthcare provider's advice.
- If you have a doula, home visitor, or other support person, let them know where you are and what you need. Activate your network and ask for help.



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### After a Wildfire: Safe Recovery

- Do not return home until you are told it is safe to do so.
- Continue to check your local air quality and water safety alerts.
- Protect yourself from ash. Wash it off your skin and/or mouth and rinse it out of your eyes as soon as you can. Do not clear or handle wildfire debris until health and safety officials say it is safe.
- Ask your healthcare provider if you have specific questions about your pregnancy



### Resources for January 2025 Wildfires

**BreastfeedLA** – Free breast pumps and lactation consultant services available as of 1/25 [www.breastfeedla.org/](http://www.breastfeedla.org/)

**San Gabriel Valley AAIMM CAT** – Providing baby essentials at local evacuation sites as of 1/25 [www.blackinfantsandfamilies.org/sangabriel](http://www.blackinfantsandfamilies.org/sangabriel)

**Disaster Resource Centers** - Disaster Resource Centers are currently available to the public from 8AM-9PM <https://recovery.lacounty.gov/>

**Contact the Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990**

#### Perinatal Mental Health Resources

<https://directory.maternalmentalhealthnow.org/>

#### Wildfire Smoke and Ash Health Safety Tips

<http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/wildfire-health-info-smoke-tips>

#### Receive Air Quality Alerts

<http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/air-alerts>

**Public Health's Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health** - Programs include home visiting, health insurance navigation, doula support, Black Infant Health, childcare referrals, support for children with special health care needs, Asthma Coalition, and childhood lead prevention.

[publichealth.lacounty.gov/mch/](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/mch/)

Contact the Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program for full list of sources at [cpsp@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:cpsp@ph.lacounty.gov)

