



NEWS RELEASE

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Unhealthy Air Quality Expected on July 4th Health Advisory Issued for Sensitive Individuals

The Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) issued a Health Advisory today for people with asthma or other respiratory conditions, such as COPD, or with heart disease, warning them that high levels of smoke (particulate air pollution) over the 4th of July weekend could impact their health. This smoke is made up of very small particles created by fireworks. In recent years, the Health Department has found high levels of particle pollution on the night of July 3rd into early morning hours, and on the night of July 4th into the early morning hours, resulting in the Air Quality Index level of “Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups”.

“It is very likely that there will be high concentrations of fine particle pollution due to fireworks. Those most affected are the young, the elderly, and those sensitive individuals with respiratory conditions,” said Scott Holmes, Environmental Public Health Manager, with the LLCHD.

Fine particle pollution is so small that it can get deep into the lungs and cause serious health problems.

Exposure to high levels of particles, even for a few hours, can aggravate lung disease, cause asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and may increase the chance to get a respiratory infection. In people with heart disease, short-term exposures to high levels of particle pollution have been linked to angina, heart attacks and arrhythmia.

The majority of people will not be affected; however, LLCHD is recommending that individuals with asthma, allergies, lung disorders, or other respiratory conditions and those with heart conditions take extra precautions during the peak hours of air pollution, which will likely be July 4th near dusk and through mid-day on July 5th. Precautions might include avoiding extensive physical activity outdoors or choosing to remain indoors, keeping windows and doors closed. If health effects are experienced, consult your doctor.