



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ATHLETES TRAINING IN BC REGIONS AFFECTED BY SMOKE AND ASH

Victoria, BC – With wild fires raging across many areas of the province this week, BC athletes in regions affected by smoke and ash are being advised to visit [www.bcairquality.ca/readings/](http://www.bcairquality.ca/readings/) for location-specific advice regarding exercise. In many situations and locations, the advice is now: **"No need to modify your usual outdoor activities unless you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation."**

In response to athlete emails regarding respiratory concerns while training outdoors in the hazy and smoky conditions, Dr. Trent Stellingwerff, head of Innovation and Research at the Canadian Sport Institute Pacific, has received the following advice from Dr. Michael Koehle, a prominent respiratory physiologist and medical doctor at the University of British Columbia:

"If you are being affected by the air quality, my recommendation is short, low intensity activity (i.e. bike commuting, drills, strength work etc.) is probably OK out of doors," commented Dr. Koehle, who is an Associate Professor at the UBC School of Kinesiology. "Longer workouts are best modified and moved indoors. If at all possible, up the intensity and shorten the duration, and use treadmills, trainers, swimming pools, and strength equipment. Work on the neglected core, hip girdle and flexibility. It's going to take some ingenuity and creativity."

Athletes with any shortness of breath on exertion should see their doctor, who will order pulmonary function testing and prescribe some combination of the following medications if appropriate.

### Advice Concerning Medications:

- **Asthma Medications:** many are not tested whatsoever in forest fire pollution. If having excessive issues (e.g. shortness of breath on exertion), see your sports medicine doctor. (Note: in some situations, the excessive use of bronchodilators in this type of pollution might actually increase the dose of particulate matter, instead of helping).

### Other Advice:

- Masks are effective for particulates, but are poorly tolerated during training.
- Cleaning nostrils with a Neti Pot
- If nostrils are dry, try almond oil in the nasal cavity to keep moist
- Use eye drops as required

Dr. Koehle also passed on a [Danish study](#) which found that pollution can cause long-term health issues, but these issues are not compounded by exercise: <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/123-a158/>

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