

# Looking after your health during a dust storm

Dust storms are natural events that occur when heavy winds blow loose sand, dirt and other fine particles which may have adverse effects on your health. Dust storms are especially harmful for people who already have breathing-related difficulties.

## Who can be affected by dust storms?

Health effects are more likely to experience by:

- People with existing heart or lung conditions (including asthma and hayfever)
- Infants, children and adolescents
- Pregnant women and people over 65 years of age

## What are the potential health effects?

Depending on the level of exposure:

- Respiratory or breathing difficulties, including asthma attacks
- Itchy or burning eyes
- Throat and/or skin irritation
- Coughing or sneezing

## What health precautions can I take?

- Stay indoors, with windows and doors closed
- Airconditioned environments can provide protection, switch to recycle or recirculate
- Avoid outdoor activity. If you must go outside spend as little time outside as possible
- Avoid vigorous exercise if you have asthma, diabetes, heart disease or a breathing related condition
- If you have asthma, continue your medication and consult your general practitioner if required. Seek medical attention if your symptoms worsen
- If your car is air-conditioned, switch the air intake to 'recirculate'
- If you must be outdoors, consider wearing a P2 rated mask to filter fine particles. These masks are available from hardware retailers

## Further Information:

See your doctor or health clinic

For health information [Call 13 HEALTH \(13 43 25 84\)](tel:13432584) for qualified health advice anytime

Or visit: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/environmental/after-a-disaster/bushfires/airborne-dust-and-health-effects>