

Are you ready?

# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

As fires rage around the state and air quality hovers in the danger zone, read how to avoid asthma attacks and safely grill in this high-danger fire season.



## SAFE GRILLING

Millions of grilling enthusiasts take to their backyards each year to cook delicious foods over an open flame. Grilling is embedded in the history of many cultures, and to this day many people feel nothing beats the savory flavor characteristic of grilled meats, poultry, seafood, and vegetables.

Although many people safely enjoy outdoor barbecues every day, accidents can happen. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, roughly 6,000 grill fires take place on residential property every year in the United States alone. Many grilling accidents can be prevented with some safety precautions and a little common sense.

When grilling, place the grill in a safe location. Grills should be at least 10 feet away from the house when they are in use. Also, keep the grill away from wooden overhangs or other structures attached to the house, such as garages and porches.

Before using a gas grill, inspect it to make sure there are no gas leaks. Ensure hoses are properly connected and that the grill looks in good repair.

Use propane and charcoal grills outdoors only. Never bring such grills into your house, even if it seems like there is ample ventilation. Potentially fatal carbon monoxide can build up quickly.

Keep children and pets away from the grill area. Grills can be knocked over easily, and kids and pets may burn themselves if they bump into a hot grill.

Clean the grill regularly. Grease and fat buildup forms in the tray below the grill and can be quite flammable. By brushing off the grates after each use and periodically removing food and grease buildup, you can prevent flare-ups that may ignite the grill.

Always tend the grill while cooking. Walking away for even a minute may lead to accidents.

Store unused propane tanks upright at all times to prevent leakage. Keep them outdoors and beyond the reach of children. Never smoke near propane cylinders and never move a lit grill.

Keep a fire extinguisher handy in the event of a flare-up. A hose may not prove effective on a grease fire.

It's also important to emphasize food safety when grilling. Invest in a food thermometer so you can test the internal temperature of foods and prevent foodborne illnesses.

Grilling is a great and flavorful way to cook. But safety must remain a priority when grilling.

For more information on specific fires burning throughout the state and air quality information, please visit [rapa.org](http://rapa.org) and [www.oregon.gov/ODF/Fire/pages/FireStats.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/Fire/pages/FireStats.aspx).

## Avoid an asthma attack with these tips

Millions of people — 25.9 million in the United States alone — have asthma, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. Asthma has become increasingly prevalent in all sex, age and racial groups since the early 1980s. It is one of the most common and costly diseases, and still has no cure.

Swelling of the airways occurs when a person has asthma. This can result in wheezing, coughing and tightness in the chest. For those who cannot find relief, asthma attacks can prove deadly. Although there is no way to prevent asthma, by following a plan, there are ways to lessen the frequency and severity of attacks. Most of these tips involve reducing contact with allergens that can trigger asthma attacks.

### Home

First, assess your house to identify and reduce common allergens.

- Wash linens and clothing in hot water to kill off any dust mites. The water temperature should be at least 130 F.
- If pets trigger a reaction, keep companion animals off of furniture and beds where they can leave fur and dander behind. Limit the rooms in which pets can stay. There is some research that states children exposed to animals early in life may actually be less likely to develop allergies and asthma.
- Put allergy-proof covers on pillows.
- Vacuum at least twice a week with a HEPA air filter-enhanced vacuum cleaner.
- Reduce humidity around the house, as it can lead to the prevalence of mold. Mold is a common asthma trigger. That means using a dehumidifier, keeping bathrooms clean and dry and repairing any leaks promptly.
- Insist that people who smoke tobacco products do so outside of the house. Secondhand smoke has been shown to increase the development of asthma and other chronic respiratory illnesses, says the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology.

### Outside, work and school

You may have less control over allergens outside of the home, but there are still ways to cut down on attacks.

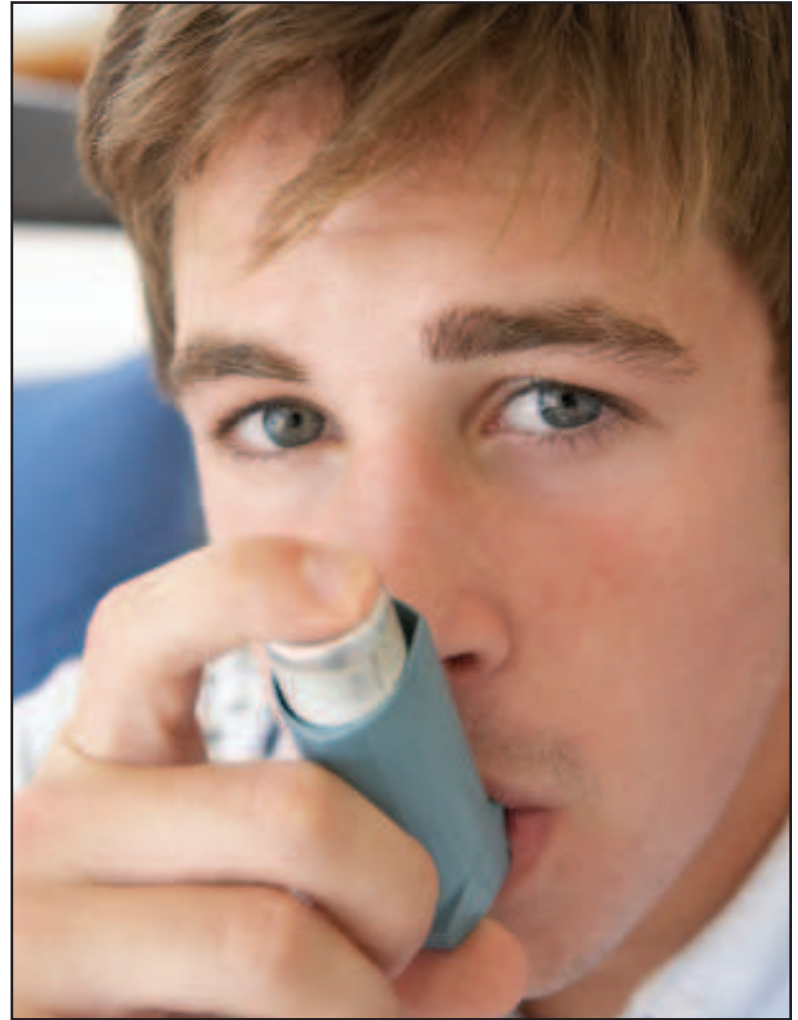
- Avoid smoking areas outside of stores and office buildings.
- Know the office cleaning schedule and work around those hours. In some instances, cleaning products and other chemicals can trigger attacks.
- Keep stress at a minimum because intense emotions can bring on asthma symptoms, according to Paul Ehrlich, M.D., coauthor of "Asthma Allergies Children: A Parent's Guide."
- Check the air quality outdoors before venturing outside. Stay inside during ozone alerts or when the air is very humid or stagnant.
- Seasonal allergies and asthma often go hand-in-hand. Check pollen, mold and ragweed counts. Stay indoors on peak days.
- Be sure physical education teachers are aware that gym class may trigger asthma attacks in your children, and that they should look for apparent symptoms.

In addition to these tips, a rescue inhaler can help quiet a potential attack. Keep medication available at all times. Plus, speak with a doctor about customizing an attack prevention plan even further. More information is available at [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org).

## Home fire safety tips

Here's some things you can do to increase your chance of survival in a fire:

- Install smoke alarms on every story of your home and outside sleeping areas. Be sure to test them monthly, clean them every six months and replace batteries in spring and fall. Having working fire alarms can cut your chance of dying in a fire in half!
- Have a fire escape plan for your family and practice it. A small fire can spread rapidly — you may only have minutes or seconds to escape. When going over the details of your escape plan, check windows and doors to ensure all open easily. Know your local emergency number (911). Never stop to gather belongings or re-enter a home after safely outside.
- When renovating, consider using fire-rated, noncombustible products. Your choice of insulation, for example, can be vital. Stone wool insulation, like that produced by Roxul, resists temperatures up to approximately 2,150 F. When directly exposed to fire, it will not off-gas, contribute to toxic smoke or promote flames. Fire-resistant building materials can give you extra time to escape when seconds count.
- Purchase a multi-use fire ladder for each bedroom in your home and practice using it. A fire ladder may be your only escape option if flames block critical exits.



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## PUT TOGETHER A PLAN

Make sure all the pieces are in place to render you and your family prepared in the event of a natural disaster.

- Listen to radio or television newscasts for the latest weather information, and follow all evacuation directions and suggestions.
- Keep a stock of non-perishable food items as well as bottled water on hand inside your home.
- Keep a 72 Hour Kit on hand inside your home that is easy to get to in the event of a disaster.

For more information and tips on disaster response and preparedness, contact your local emergency services center.  
**South Lane Fire & Rescue • 233 Harrison Ave, Cottage Grove 541-942-4493 • 55 South 1st Street, Creswell 541-895-2506**



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