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Smoke from Canadian wildfires ruins outdoor activities in Delaware

Smoke from wildfires in eastern Canada diminished Delaware's air quality on June 8, 9, 29, and 30. On those dates, Delaware and other central and mid-Atlantic states experienced unhealthy air quality due to the smoke's particulate matter.

When the first round of smoke finally cleared, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) warned that it could return due to a change in weather patterns and wildfires still burning. Northerly winds pushed it here again, forcing people inside during air quality alerts.

Inhaling smoke or fine particulate matter 2.5 can worsen underlying breathing diseases such as asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and cause heart failure, heart attack, and stroke, according to the Division of Public Health (DPH).

DPH and DNREC advise the public to avoid the smoke by staying indoors in a cool and clean environment, and for individuals working outdoors to wear properly fitted N95 or KN95 masks (not cloth or surgical masks). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest closing off a room from outside air and setting up a portable air cleaner or a filter to keep that air clean.

Sign up to receive Delaware air quality alerts at de.gov/aqi. Access real-time U.S. AQI data and interactive maps at the Environmental Protection Agency's website, www.airnow.gov.

Wildfires can happen anywhere

While wildfires in Canada and western U.S. states dominate headlines, Delaware forests, grasslands, and marshes can catch fire. Build your resiliency to fire by taking these steps from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):

- Receive alerts of hazards several ways. Download [the Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\) app](#) to receive 24/7 alerts.
- Make an emergency plan. Visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).
- Review your property insurance policies and coverage for all possible hazards. Purchase flood insurance, which is not typically covered by homeowner's insurance, from the [National Flood Insurance Program](#).
- Make sure your personal identification documents are up to date. Download the [Emergency Financial First Aid Kit](#) to gather your personal, financial, and medical documents in one place. Use the [Safeguard Critical Documents and Valuables checklist](#).
- Use fire resistant materials to build your home, renovate, or make repairs.
- Create a fire-resistant zone of at least 30 feet around your home that is free of flammable materials such as leaves and debris. Learn how to reduce your risk by preparing your home and landscaping; visit www.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires.
- Begin saving for emergencies. Keep a small amount of small bills at home in a safe place in case you need to purchase emergency supplies, fuel, or food. ATMs and credit cards may not work during a disaster.



Keep recreational vehicle trailer chains off of the ground to prevent sparks that can cause accidental wildfires.

<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/wui/outreach/>





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Officials: Talk openly with children about drugs and alcohol dangers to prevent them experimenting with it

The U.S. median monthly overdose deaths among individuals ages 10 to 19 years old increased 109% from 2019 to 2021, according to the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control.

Parents are advised to make homes as safe as possible by securing medication, safely disposing of medications, and consider obtaining Narcan and training on when and how to use it if there are opioids or opioid users in the child's life.

Several tools are available to parents and guardians to educate themselves and talk openly with their children about drugs and alcohol. Parents, caregivers, and educators can use the Talk2KidsAboutDrugs toolkit when talking to teens about substance use and addiction risks. The toolkit offers fact sheets, educational materials, and more at www.helpsherede.com/talk-2-kids-about-drugs.

[#MyReasonWhyDE](https://www.instagram.com/myreasonwhyde) is a social media platform where teens share their reason to remain drug free.

If you or a loved one is struggling with addiction in Delaware, call the Department of Health and Social Services' 24/7 Crisis Hotline to be connected to treatment and recovery options.

- In New Castle County, call 1-800-652-2929.
- In Kent and Sussex counties, call 1-800-345-6785.

For free 24/7 counseling, coaching, and support, as well as links to mental health, addiction, and crisis services, call the Delaware Hope Line at 1-833-9-HOPEDE or 1-833-946-7333.

For treatment and recovery services in Delaware or nearby states, visit HelpsHereDE.com.

DPH publishes 2023 diabetes report

Prevention, early diagnosis, and management of diabetes can prevent and reduce poor outcomes including heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, lower limb amputations, blindness, and death. Individuals with diabetes can manage their condition through healthy lifestyle behaviors and medication adherence to control blood glucose levels.

While the five-year age-adjusted mortality rate for diabetes continues to decline in Delaware, there are concerning disparities by race. According to [The Impact of Diabetes in Delaware, 2023 report](#), the five-year age-adjusted mortality rate for diabetes among non-Hispanic Blacks (34.5 deaths per 100,000 population) is twice that of non-Hispanic Whites (17.2 deaths per 100,000 population).

The report, prepared for the Delaware General Assembly, is published by the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health and Division of Medicaid & Medical Assistance; and the Delaware Department of Human Resources, Statewide Benefits Office. [Click here](#) to read the agencies' seven recommendations.

According to DPH's Diabetes and Heart Disease Prevention and Control Program, 24.6% of Delaware adults have either diabetes or prediabetes.

Prediabetes and diabetes cost Delaware \$1.1 billion annually – \$818 million in direct medical expenses and \$293 million in indirect costs. On average, medical expenditures for a person with diabetes are 2.3 times higher than for a person without diabetes.

In Fiscal Year 2022, diabetes was the costliest clinical condition by episodes of care among the State's 13,123 Group Health Insurance Plan members with diabetes. The FY22 total allowed amount for diabetes was \$85.3 million, a nearly \$9 million increase over FY21.

In FY22, Delaware Medicaid Managed Care Organizations directly reimbursed providers \$49 million for diabetes-related care. Fee-for-service claims for diabetes-related care among Delaware Medicaid clients totaled an additional \$2.6 million.



Walk or pedal multiple trails to explore the state

Delaware offers numerous trails for pedestrians, cyclists, dog walkers, and families to stay active outdoors.

The Delaware Department of Transportation (DeIDOT) provided this summary of projects to expand the state's bicycle network:



Photo: Daniel Paschall

- DeIDOT recently completed the two-way cycle track in Newark which allows cyclists to travel safely in both directions on Delaware Avenue in a separated bike lane.
- When the [Capital City Trail](#) loop is completed in Kent County, it will be an approximately 15-mile loop around Camden and Dover. The section from South State Street to Lordship Lane near Camden was recently completed. The remaining connection will be completed as part of the East Camden Bypass project.
- The section of Dover's Senator Bikeway between Mifflin Road and Dover High School is anticipated to begin construction in September.
- The popular [Georgetown to Lewes Trail](#) follows the rail bed of the former Delaware Coast Line Railroad. When complete, the trail will connect Georgetown, Lewes, and Cape Henlopen State Park, as well as Rehoboth Beach by way of the 5.8-mile [Junction & Breakwater Trail](#). Two stretches of the Georgetown to Lewes Trail are complete: seven miles between Gills Neck Road and Fisher Road in the Cool Spring area; and a three-quarter mile leg between the Georgetown Little League Park and Airport Road in Georgetown. The segment between Fisher Road and State Road in Georgetown is in the design phase. DeIDOT received a federal RAISE grant to construct the remaining six miles of the trail.

For more information about biking in Delaware, visit [deldot.gov/programs/bike/biking_in_delaware](https://delawaregreenways.org/trail-library/) and the Delaware Greenways' Interactive Map to Trails: <https://delawaregreenways.org/trail-library/>

Meet the U.S. physical activity recommendations to improve health

[The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition](#) recommends regular physical activity for ages 3 and older to maintain health and decrease the risk for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, cancer, overweight/obesity, arthritis, and depression. Key recommendations are:

- "Preschool-aged children (ages 3 through 5 years) should be physically active throughout the day to enhance growth and development. Adult caregivers of preschool-aged children should encourage active play that includes a variety of activity types."
- "Children and adolescents ages 6 through 17 years should do 60 minutes (one hour) or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily and include aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and bone-strengthening activity."
- "Adults should do at least 150 minutes (two hours and 30 minutes) to 300 minutes (five hours) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (one hour and 15 minutes) to 150 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities of moderate or greater intensity and that involve all major muscle groups on two or more days a week."

Older adults who cannot do 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week because of chronic conditions "should be as physically active as their abilities and conditions allow." Every week, "older adults should do multicomponent physical activity that includes balance training as well as aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities."



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Being physically active may reduce falls, allowing older adults to continue to live independently in their own homes.

The guide includes specialized recommendations for those with osteoarthritis, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, adult cancer survivors, and those recovering from hip fractures, and who are pregnant.