

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

August 11, 2020

Forest fire in Red Lake

Northwestern Health Unit encourages everyone to stay as safe as possible during the evacuation of Red Lake due to the forest fire. Forest fire smoke can be harmful to your health. If you develop a new or worsening cough, trouble breathing, chest pains, significant weakness or fatigue, please seek medical care as soon as possible.

Given the increased risk of illness due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all evacuees should do their best to continue practicing the steps that will prevent the spread of COVID-19. These include [physical distancing](#) and limiting close contact with others outside of your family or social circle while sheltered, including during meal-times and any transportation. Evacuees should [wear masks](#) when unable to maintain a distance of 2 metres or 6 feet from others, avoid touching their face, and practice proper [hand hygiene](#) throughout the duration of the evacuation. Evacuees should actively [self-monitor](#) for the duration of the evacuation period and contact an assessment centre if you develop symptoms of COVID-19.

Multiple communities in northwestern Ontario are likely to experience smoke in the air. NWHU would like to remind individuals, especially children, elderly, pregnant women, people with heart or lung conditions, or persons with active and/or physical jobs, to reduce the length of time they are exposed to the forest fire smoke and the amount of air breathed in by keeping windows and doors closed, using air filters and reducing physical activity.

For more information please contact your local health unit office to speak with a public health inspector.

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Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.

A reminder to the media that Dr. Kit Young-Hoon hosts online COVID-19 media briefings every Tuesday, 10:00 am - 11:00 am CT as well as Q&A sessions for the public every Thursday, 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm CT. If you do not have a link to the media briefings, please email jbegg@nwhu.on.ca.