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Health officials warn residents about dangers of smoke and ash from wildland fire in southwest Riverside County

Health officials are urging residents in portions of southwest Riverside County to limit outdoor activities because of smoke and ash generated by the Teneja Fire near Murrieta.

The fire, which started Wednesday in the rugged wilderness west of Murrieta, has grown to about 150 acres and sent up a large column of black smoke that can be seen throughout the region. Many residents in southwest Riverside County neighborhoods may find driveways and homes covered in white ash that may fall onto cars, settled into pools and onto sidewalks.

“Ash and smoke can be hard on anyone to breathe, but especially those with lung disease,” said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, Riverside County public health officer. “Everyone worries about the flames, but smoke can impact you even if you’re miles away from the fire.”

The smoke and ash advisory was issued by Kaiser for portions of Southwest Riverside County, including Murrieta, Temecula and Lake Elsinore areas.

Among the precautions:

- ■ Residents should avoid any vigorous outdoor or indoor exertion.
- ■ Those with respiratory or heart disease, older adults, and children should remain indoors.
- ■ Windows and doors should be closed.
- ■ Run your air conditioner if you have one and keep the fresh air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent bringing additional smoke inside.

- ■ Avoid using a swamp cooler or whole-house fan to prevent bringing additional smoke inside.
- ■ To avoid worsening the health effects of smoke, don't use indoor or outdoor wood-burning appliances, including fireplaces.

The fire could burn for several days, so residents can get updates on air quality by clicking on www.rivcoph.org and fire updates at www.fire.ca.gov