

## **WOOD BURNING AND LUNG HEALTH** **BURN IT SMART AND HEALTHY**

Maine CDC/DHHS 2008-2009

### The Problem

- 1 in 3 Maine households have someone living there with asthma, another chronic lung disease, or chronic heart disease. These are households who more commonly report having trouble heating their homes.
- Maine has the highest childhood and adult asthma rates in the country. 10% of adults and 12% of children in Maine have asthma.
- Wood is a renewable source of heat. It has some benefits over non-renewable fossil fuels such as oil.
- However, smoke from wood burning can cause air pollution and public health problems. It can cause or make worse asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and heart disease. It affects children and the elderly more than others.
- Half of Maine households heat with at least some wood.
- Maine homes with an asthmatic child are more likely to have difficulty paying for heat and are more likely to be heating with wood.
- 1 in 3 Maine wood stove owners report their wood stove is >20 years of age, ie older than the EPA cleaner standards.
- Heating with wood is less prevalent and heating with oil is most prevalent in York and Cumberland. Heating with wood, especially pellets, is most common in Aroostook.
- 1 in 7 Maine households allow people to smoke tobacco in their home.

### What You Can Do To Improve Air Quality For Breathing While Heating With Wood

- Weatherize your home, such as closing up areas that will let heat escape.
- Have your chimney, flue, and woodstove inspected and cleaned at least once per year.
- Use wood pellets. They burn 25-50% cleaner than cord wood.
- Replace an old woodstove, fireplace, or fireplace insert (built before the late 1980s) with a newer more efficient EPA-certified equipment that uses less wood and burns up to 90% cleaner.
- If using cord wood, burn hardwoods that are clean, dry, and seasoned (>6 months) because they burn cleaner and are less likely to pollute the air.
- Never burn garbage, trash, plastics, styrofoam, paints, painted wood, salt water wood, cleaning chemicals such as solvents, charcoal/coal, or treated woods (treated with varnishes, sealants, or pressure-treated). These substances can result in toxins being burned and released into the air.
- Burn small hot fires. They produce less smoke than those that are left to smolder.
- Split wood into 4-6 inch pieces. Fires burn cleaner with more surface area exposed to the flame.
- Keep your home tobacco smoke free.

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Maine Governor's Stay Safe and Warm Website

[http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/contact/citizen\\_services/safeandwarm.html](http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/contact/citizen_services/safeandwarm.html)

211 Maine

<http://www.211maine.org/>

Maine Department of Conservation's Wood-To-Energy Initiative and Fact Sheets

[http://www.maine.gov/doc/initiatives/wood\\_to\\_energy/firewood\\_heat.html](http://www.maine.gov/doc/initiatives/wood_to_energy/firewood_heat.html)

US EPA Reducing Air Pollution from Residential Wood Burning

[http://www.epa.gov/air/community/guide/wood\\_stoves\\_comm\\_info.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/air/community/guide/wood_stoves_comm_info.pdf)

Burn It Smart and Healthy – Environment Canada and Health Canada Fact Sheet About Wood Burning

[http://www.ec.gc.ca/cleanair-airpur/335DD970-9FFD-4227-B3E0-54EED667DCAA/Health\\_&\\_Wood\\_heating-En.pdf](http://www.ec.gc.ca/cleanair-airpur/335DD970-9FFD-4227-B3E0-54EED667DCAA/Health_&_Wood_heating-En.pdf)

Wood Burning Emission Comparisons

[http://www.ec.gc.ca/cleanair-airpur/335DD970-9FFD-4227-B3E0-54EED667DCAA/Emission\\_comparison-En.pdf](http://www.ec.gc.ca/cleanair-airpur/335DD970-9FFD-4227-B3E0-54EED667DCAA/Emission_comparison-En.pdf)

Environment Canada Burn It Smart Brochures

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/cleanair-airpur/default.asp?lang=En&xml=335DD970-9FFD-4227-B3E0-54EED667DCAA>