



wildsight golden

Box 25 Golden BC V0A 1H0 • 250-439-8491 • e golden@wildsight.ca

For Immediate Release

Why is burning wood bad for our health?

November 22, 2023

While most people enjoy the feel of wood heat and the comfort of a fire, few realize that they are harming themselves and their neighbours by burning wood. Even burning dry wood releases a long list of dangerous compounds that end up inside your home, your neighbour's home and eventually enter into the lungs and blood stream. This article will explore a few of these compounds in hopes of spreading the word that wood smoke is both dangerous and potentially deadly.

When wood is burned, a large number of particles and compounds are released. Health risks come from both the tiny and invisible particles and from the over 200 compounds that can form when wood burns. Because the particles are so small, they can settle deep in the lungs and move into the blood stream, possibly causing asthma attacks, heart disease, bronchitis and lung disease. In addition to tiny particles, wood smoke contains many of the same compounds as cigarette smoke, sometimes in much greater concentrations. These compounds include volatile organic compounds like benzene and dioxin (known to cause cancer), carbon monoxide (potentially deadly with no color or smell) nitrogen dioxide (lowers resistance to lung disease), and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (linked to cancer and organ damage) to name a few.

These harmful compounds enter the air and may travel long distances before settling. Studies have also shown that these compounds are found

in greater concentrations inside homes heated by wood stoves, leading some researchers to suggest warning consumers before they choose to install a wood heat source.

While use of wood for heating has increased in Canada, research into the health impacts of wood smoke shows that this trend is a dangerous one. While it may seem less expensive to heat with wood, the health impacts cost us all.

.
*For more information, please contact Leslie Adams, Branch Manager,
golden@wildsight.ca*