**Health Effects of PM:**

Particulate Matter (PM) and Wildfire Smoke

Particulate Matter is a complex mixture that may contain soot, smoke, metals, nitrates, sulfates, dust, water and tire rubber. It can be directly emitted, as in smoke from a fire, or it can form in the atmosphere from reactions of gases such as nitrogen oxides.

The size of particles is directly linked to their potential for causing health problems. Small particles (known as PM2.5 or fine particulate matter) pose the greatest problems because they bypass the body’s natural defenses and can get deep into your lungs and potentially your bloodstream. Exposure to such particles can affect both your lungs and your heart.

Long-term exposure to particulate pollution can result in significant health problems including:

* Increased respiratory symptoms, such as irritation of the airways, coughing or difficulty breathing
* Decreased lung function
* Aggravated asthma
* Development of chronic respiratory disease in children
* Development of chronic bronchitis or chronic obstructive lung disease
* Irregular heartbeat
* Nonfatal heart attacks
* Premature death in people with heart or lung disease, including death from lung cancer