



After the Fire:

Your Emotional and Physical Well-Being

Your Emotional Well-Being

After a disaster, such as a wildfire, you may feel sad, mad, guilty, or numb. You may have trouble sleeping, be constantly “on the lookout” for danger, or be jumpy, irritable, or angry. Contact with certain people, sights or sounds may bring back bad memories or an overwhelming sense of grief. These are all normal reactions to stress. This is a difficult time, but there are things you can do to help cope with the stress and stay healthy even during the cleanup time that follows.

- ▶ Stay Active - Volunteer for work in a shelter, community, school, or faith-based organization.
- ▶ Help with cleanup and repair if it is safe to do so.
- ▶ Spend time with others.
- ▶ Participate in activities you enjoy.
- ▶ Take breaks from the cleanup efforts.
- ▶ Exercise (indoors if air quality is not acceptable).
- ▶ Keep a journal.
- ▶ Talk about your feelings.

Keep in mind that returning to the way you felt before the disaster may take some time. If you are having trouble managing your feelings, completing daily tasks, or caring for your family, talk to a psychologist, social worker, or professional counselor.

Your Physical Well-Being

Protect yourself from injuries during cleanup.

- ▶ **Drive safely:** Be alert for broken stop lights and missing street signs. Watch out for trash and debris on the road.
- ▶ **Stay safe around damaged buildings or structures:** Wait to return to buildings during daylight hours, when it is easier to avoid hazards, particularly if the electricity is off and you have no lights.
- ▶ **Be alert to gas leaks:** If you smell gas or suspect a leak, leave the house immediately.
- ▶ **Stay safe during cleanup:** Wear hard hats, goggles, heavy work gloves, and watertight boots with steel toe and insole (not just steel shank).
- ▶ **Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning:** Never use generators, pressure washers, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning devices inside your home.
- ▶ **Avoid electrical hazards:** Never make contact with power lines, regardless of whether they are on the ground or intact.

Resources

For additional information on how to prevent injuries go to <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/injury/facts.asp> or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

For coping with stress, use the numbers below for help:

American Psychological Association
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
National Center for Child Traumatic Stress
National Domestic Violence Hotline
National Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-964-2000
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
1-310-235-2633
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
1-800-4-A-CHILD (422-4453)

www.apa.org
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
www.nctsn.org
www.ndvh.org
www.childhelpusa.org