

I'm really, really upset about the wood smoke where we live. As in, it makes me cry. And I'm really most sad about how it is affecting our children...

*Our children are breathing air that is really, really, really irreversibly bad for them. I worry about the short term effects, but I'm not losing as much sleep over red eyes and runny noses and asthma as I am the long term effects of wood smoke pollution. **Is the wood smoke where I live increasing my children's risk of cancer? That is what keeps me awake at night.***

When I think of everything we do as parents to protect our children and try to keep them safe and healthy, burning wood makes no sense. It feels very lonely to be educated about it, worried about it, and have others shrug it off as a lifestyle choice.

There are months during which my children cannot go outside in our yard to play, or anywhere around here, without playing in wood smoke. Some days are worse than others. It breaks my heart that even when they come inside, they are not safe. Even the most tightly sealed home or school can't keep such incredibly small particulate pollution out.

We cannot enjoy looking at the stars (the stars are visible, but we can't be out in the air). We cannot grow food in our garden that is safe to eat. No air filter can change this.

What saddens me too is the irony that we live in a part of the world where we have options. For so many in developing countries, wood smoke pollution cannot be escaped. But here, we get to choose.

E.G. mother of two in San Geronimo Valley, California

Excerpted and condensed from 'Doctors and Scientists Against Wood Smoke Pollution'
'Resources' 'Personal Stories'