

Volcanic ash from Iceland

Recent concern about the health effects to the UK population of the volcanic ash cloud from Iceland has diminished, although eruptions from Eyjafjallajökull are continuing periodically with debris being emitted into the atmosphere.

The Meteorological Office (Met Office) has information on their website, see <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk> and the Health Protection Agency (HPA) has information on their website, see <http://www.hpa.org.uk>

The HPA is keen to ensure that the public are kept fully informed on the potential risks posed by the volcanic ash and in late April, the HPA said, "Data gathered so far from existing health surveillance systems has revealed that the number of people who have reported conditions, including respiratory symptoms, itchy eyes and sore throats, does not indicate that the volcanic plume has had a significant impact on public health. This is not unexpected as only small quantities of ash have been deposited on the UK."

As the plume has largely dispersed away from the UK, scientists have concluded that the ash currently (late April) poses no threat to public health in the UK.

The HPA and the Met Office will continue to monitor the situation and issue any further advice or updates as necessary.

Any enquiries on the likely duration of the ash plume over the UK should be addressed to the Met Office. Concerns about allotments and gardens should be addressed to the Food Standards Agency <http://www.food.gov.uk/>