

HOW CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTS CHILDRENS HEALTH

Climate Change Impacts	Health Effects on Children
Increases in ground-level ozone (smog) and other air pollution	Asthma exacerbations; interferes with normal lung development; increases allergic rhinitis, bronchitis
Increases in airborne allergens such as pollen	Asthma exacerbations; increases allergic rhinitis, bronchitis
Heat waves	Heat stress, heat stroke, reduced school performance
Extreme weather events (rain, hurricane, tornado, flooding)	Injuries, drowning
Droughts, floods, increased mean temperature	Vector-, food- and water-borne diseases
Sea level rise	Injuries, drowning, water and soil salinization, ecosystem and economic disruption
Drought, ecosystem migration	Food and water shortages, malnutrition
Climate change generally	Mental health impacts

Adapted from CDC Policy on Climate Change and Public Health, http://www.cdc.gov/climatechange/pubs/Climate_Change_Policy.pdf.

LEARN MORE

REMEMBER: Lawmakers work for you – that’s their job. They want to hear from constituents, via email, phone, or even in person. Nurses and doctors are among the most trusted professions. Policymakers listen to what you have to say.

Resources for healthcare professionals on climate change and clinical care

ANHE’s Advancing Clean Air, Climate, & Health: Opportunities for Nurses: <http://bit.ly/anhe-climate>

Health Care Without Harm: Healthy Hospitals, Healthy Planet, Healthy People: <http://bit.ly/healthwithoutharm>

Physicians for Social Responsibility’s Climate Change and Health Resources: <http://bit.ly/psr-climate-resources>

National Association of City and County Health Officers Climate Change Resources: <http://bit.ly/naccho-climate>

Georgetown Climate Center State and Local Adaptation Plans: <http://bit.ly/georgetown-climate>

WHAT HEALTH PROFESSIONALS CAN DO ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

A resource for pediatricians, pediatric nurse practitioners, and other health professionals



Moms Clean Air Force



Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments



Dear Trusted Healthcare Professional,

Climate change threatens my family's health.

As a parent, I want you to talk to me and other parents about the health risks of climate change.

Our communities are experiencing more heat, floods, storms, wildfires, drought, and sea level rise. I am concerned about rising rates of asthma, allergies, and insect-borne diseases. I worry that children will suffer the most. Help me protect my family from the health impacts of climate change.

Thank you for the care you provide my children.

Sincerely,

Concerned Parents



WHAT YOU CAN DO

TALK WITH YOUR PATIENTS

Here's what you can say: "We are seeing more unhealthy air days due to climate change. On those days you need to limit outside play due to increased levels of smog that may make asthma worse. Beside keeping your kids inside on unhealthy air days, you can help local air quality by decreasing the use of your car and not idling your car when parked."

Take it further: Ask your patients, "Do you know how to find out about your local air quality?" Go to EPA Air Now and enter your zip code: <http://www.airnow.gov>.

TALK WITH YOUR POLICYMAKERS

Here's what you can say: "Children rely on us, as adults and parents, to create the environment in which they live. As the climate changes, we will see more poor air quality days and more kids with asthma at the emergency room because they can't breathe. As a health care provider, I have seen firsthand kids suffering from asthma. We should do everything in our power to minimize this risk. If we take action now, we can prevent suffering and disease in our children and communities."

Take it further: Ask your policymakers, "What are you doing to protect my patients from climate change?" Go to <http://bit.ly/psr-advocacy> to learn more about how to be an effective advocate.

TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES

Here's what you can say: "We are seeing an epidemic of asthma and respiratory disease. The number of people suffering myocardial infarctions is increasing. These and many other illnesses are exacerbated by poor air quality. Climate change is predicted to lead to deteriorating air quality. We have a professional obligation to protect public health. If we don't address climate change now, the prevalence of these and other health problems will continue to rise."

Take it further: Ask your colleagues, "How can we work together as healthcare professionals to address climate change?" Go to <http://bit.ly/cha-climate> to learn more about the moral and ethical duty of healthcare professionals to respond to climate change.

DID YOU KNOW?

HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

The US health sector's use of conventional energy sources, such as coal fired power plants, costs the US economy more than \$600 million per year in adverse health impacts – including increases in asthma, respiratory illness, and hospital emergency department visits. Source: <http://bit.ly/healthwithoutharm>



AIR POLLUTION

Climate change is projected to increase summertime ground level ozone concentrations by 1 to 10 parts per billion this century. Elevated ozone levels trigger asthma attacks, increase respiratory infections, and interfere with lung development. Source: <http://bit.ly/pmc-climate>



ALLERGENS

The length of the ragweed pollen season has increased in parts of the US by 11-27 days because of rising temperatures. As the climate warms and pollen season lengthens, we can expect increases in the symptoms of seasonal allergies, including asthma attacks. Source: <http://bit.ly/nca-climate>



HEAT

The 20 warmest years on record have all occurred since 1981, and the 10 warmest have all occurred in the past 12 years. Death rates increase dramatically during heat waves. These deaths result from not only heat stroke, but also cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, and cerebrovascular disease. Sources: <http://bit.ly/noaa-indicators> <http://bit.ly/nca-climate>

