

HEALTHY CLIMATE Healthy Heart



“A healthy planet and healthy people are two sides of the same coin.”

Dr. Margaret Chan | World Health Organization



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How Climate Change Impacts Your Health

Climate change is the rise in average surface temperatures on Earth, mostly due to the burning of fossil fuels.

When fossil fuels are burned, they release carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases into the atmosphere. These “greenhouse gases” change the atmosphere’s natural composition and cause the planet to retain additional heat, resulting in a host of devastating impacts on ecosystems, including rising sea levels, severe weather events, droughts, and reduced air quality. These impacts on the environment have direct impacts on human health.

As Earth’s climate continues to shift, healthcare professionals are faced with managing more extreme and widespread patient and public health issues, including:

Infectious Diseases

Our changing climate increases the geographic distributions of vector-borne illnesses, like West Nile Virus and Lyme disease.



Reduced Air Quality

Increased ozone concentrations lead to worsening air quality and more asthma attacks and hospitalizations.

Rising Temperatures

Death rates during heat waves increase drastically from heat stroke, cardiovascular, respiratory, and cerebrovascular diseases.



Extreme Weather Events

Prevalence of extreme weather events increases risk of injury and death, and a range of mental health consequences.

Climate Impacts on Cardiovascular Health

Extreme Temperatures

Dysrhythmias, stroke, and other heart-related disorders

Increased Ozone Formation

Harms pulmonary gas exchange and is associated with increased incidence of heart attacks

Increased Particulate Matter

Systemic inflammation, compromised heart function, deep venous thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, and blood vessel dysfunction

Extreme Weather Events

Heart attacks, sudden cardiac death, stress-related cardiomyopathy

Vector-borne Diseases

Cardiovascular manifestations

Talk to Your Doctor if You...

- Have suffered a heart attack or had angioplasty.
- Have angina, heart failure or heart rhythm problems.
- Have diabetes mellitus.
- Smoke cigarettes.
- Have high blood pressure or high blood cholesterol.
- Have a family history of stroke or early heart disease.
- Are over 65 years old.

What You Can Do

Mitigate Your Risk

Know your health risk factors

Work with your healthcare provider to mitigate these risks. This is especially important if you have a preexisting condition such as high blood pressure, the symptoms of which can be exacerbated by climate change.

Adopt healthy habits

Reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease by maintaining a healthy weight, eating a plant-based diet and exercising regularly.

Take Action

Talk with your trusted healthcare professionals and local policymakers. Ask them to help you protect yourself and your family from the health impacts of climate change.



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For More Information

Resources

Monitor your community's air quality

www.airnowinova.gov

Learn your community's State of the Air

www.lung.org/our-initiatives/healthy-air/sota

Maintain a heart healthy lifestyle

www.heart.org

Take the heart risk assessment

www.inovaheart.org/heart-risk-assessment

Sources

American Heart Association

<http://bit.ly/2iIGRnY>

Center for Disease Control

<http://bit.ly/2ibjySL>

National Institutes of Health

<http://bit.ly/2hQlO5d>



For more on how Inova is leading on climate action, visit inova.org/gogreen

Contact us at gogreen@inova.org

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