Climate Change & Health

Climate change refers to the increase in air temperatures and changing weather patterns observed over the past several decades.

Greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide (CO₂) are created by burning fuel, agriculture, and other sources. CO₂ traps heat, causing overall increased temperatures. Trapped heat is primarily responsible for changing weather patterns.

Doctors are concerned that climate change is hurting children's health.

It affects everyone's health, but 88% of illness from climate change occurs in children under 5 years old. (McMichael and Campbell-Ledrum 2004)

How can climate change harm health?

- Extreme heat increases risk of illness and dehydration.
- Poor air quality due to increased pollutants and pollen worsen asthma and other breathing and heart problems.
- Warmer temperatures promote the growth of bacteria, viruses, and insects.
- Extreme weather causes injuries, missed work and school, and mental health issues.
- Food supply problems cause malnutrition.
Top contributors to climate change:

TRANSPORTATION

PLASTIC PRODUCTION & INDUSTRY

AGRICULTURE & LIVESTOCK FARMING

DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS

ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION

COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL USE

Each family can make a difference.

Choose locally grown food and eat less meat.

Carpool, take public transportation, walk, or bike.

Plant trees and support local parks and green spaces.

Bring reusable bags when you shop and reduce the use of plastics.

Encourage laws that reduce carbon emissions.

Support local climate and health preparedness programs.

Choose companies that use clean energy from the wind and sun.

This material was developed through the Mount Sinai Children’s Environmental Health Center (www.cehcenter.org) and Transdisciplinary Center on Early Environmental Exposures (tcee.icahn.mssm.edu, NIEHS grant P30ES023515). As part of the Institute for Exposomic Research, we translate and connect our science to supporters and communities committed to ensuring a healthier future for all. To learn more about the Institute’s research, visit icahn.mssm.edu/exposomics.