



Human Vitality

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Save Lives: Lower Your Greenhouse Gas Emissions

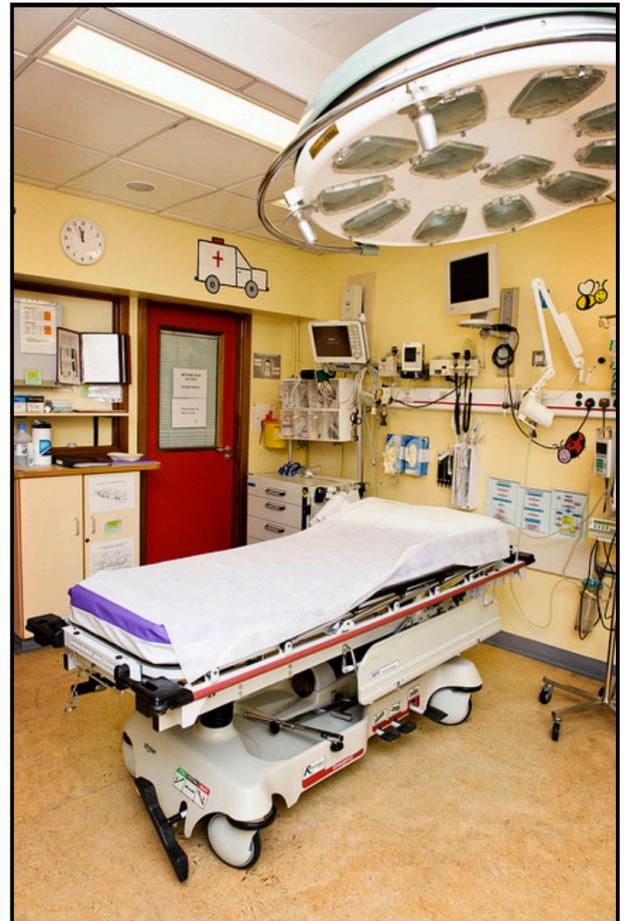
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The fact that our planet has warmed in the last 100 years by about 33°F or 0.75°C does not sound particularly alarming, but even this small global temperature increase is causing hazardous extreme weather events and increased pollution, resulting in decreased wellbeing of our human species.^[i] Global climate change affects human health at its most basic level by reducing the availability of clean air, drinking water, food supplies and shelter.

At Hearts, our hope is that we can slow and reverse climate change before we see the worst human health consequences of this looming catastrophe. Since education is one of our driving passions, we want to make you aware of climate health consequences already being experienced, what's in store if we fail to stop the warming, and what you can do to fight back.

Quick Guide: Health Effects of Climate Change

- **140,000 yearly deaths already caused by climate change:** Since 1970, global climate change has caused more than 140,000 deaths every year. ^[ii]
- **\$14 billion for climate health-related problems:** Scientists estimated that climate change will cost the US more than \$14 billion annually due to six issues that will likely worsen with climate change: pollution, hurricanes, heat waves, mosquito-borne diseases, flooding, and wildfires. ^[iii]
- **Heat wave deaths to increase 7+ times:** Heat waves are already longer and more extreme, leading to increased rates of heat strokes, severe dehydration, and death. ^[iv] Scientists predict LA's heat-related deaths will increase seven times by the end of this century. ^[v]
- **10,000s already dying in extreme heat waves:** Excess deaths due to heat waves have also been seen in Europe (70,000 people in 2003) and Russia (50,000 people in 2010). ^[vi] Children, elderly, and health-compromised people are particularly at risk.
- **Spikes in asthma, allergies due to critical air pollution:** Warmer temperatures will increase the number of days with unhealthy and even critical levels of air pollutants, particularly ground level ozone (smog) which damages lung tissue and causes airway inflammation. People with asthma are particularly vulnerable. ^[vii]
- **Malaria, Lyme disease, West Nile, and dengue coming to America:** Warm temperatures create favorable conditions for many pathogens, ^[viii] because of the increased geographic range of disease-borne insects such as ticks and mosquitoes. West Nile virus, originally from Africa, has already established itself in the US due to the warmer temperature it needs to thrive. ^[ix]



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Take Action! Cut Your Greenhouse Gas Emissions

1. **Eat less meat and dairy:** One of the most effective ways for you to fight climate change is to **limit or eliminate meat and dairy** from your diet by adopting a vegetarian or vegan way of life. ^[x] Educate yourself by calculating how much your food contributes to your carbon footprint using the Nature Conservancy's [What's My Carbon Footprint?](#) tool.
2. **Lower your fossil fuel consumption:** You may not realize it, but you likely consume oil every single day, whether it's to run your vehicle, power your computer, or heat and cool your home. Lowering your consumption of fossil fuels is the next best thing for fighting climate change. Look for **transportation alternatives** like using public transport; walking or riding a bike to work; buying a hybrid vehicle; carpooling whenever possible. Start by **calculating your carbon footprint** and then get advice on the most effective ways to reduce your fuel consumption.
3. **Make your home more energy efficient:** Start by doing a home energy audit, then implementing the ideas that come out

of that process, which might include adding an alternative energy source (solar, wind, geothermal, hydro); using energy efficient appliances and light bulbs; insulating your home to avoid wasting energy, and more. Be sure to take advantage of tax rebates for energy efficient appliances and renewable energy generators (check out the [DSIRE USA database](#) to get started!).

4. **Participate in the climate change policy making:** Tell your political candidate you want to see climate change legislation to fight against the health impacts of climate change. Then join political advocacy groups on climate change to make your voice heard. Sign up with [350.org](#) and start to get politically active in the fight against climate change health hazards.

Dig Deeper: More on the Health Impact of Climate Change

- Read [Climate Change and Health](#) report to get the full picture of how global warming may impact your wellbeing.
- Find out what the US EPA is doing regarding global warming by reading up on [Climate Change Regulatory Initiatives](#) and supporting these initiatives when you vote.
- Learn about the most vulnerable Americans in the face of climate change (12% of Americans are over 65 right now, and this percentage is expected to grow to 21% by 2050) and how heat waves will particularly affect urban areas: [Heat Island Effect](#).
- Explore how severe weather can cause human injuries and even deaths because of inaccessibility of food and clean water; interrupted communications and medical services; carbon monoxide poisoning from portable generators; increases in mental health issues such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, and more through [Human Health Impact and Adaptation](#).
- Discover how increased particulate matter from power plants, fossil-fuel powered engines, wood burning, forest fires, and steel mills will impact air quality, worsening respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, and increasing chronic lung disease and asthma in [Integrated Science Assessment for Particulate Matter: Final Report](#).

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