Certain populations, such as children, are more vulnerable to negative health impacts caused by climate change. Starting from when they are developing in a mother’s womb and throughout the years as they grow into adulthood, children of all ages are more at risk to health impacts from climate-related events. By addressing climate change now, we have an opportunity to prevent disease and help our children live healthier lives.

Breathing in unhealthy levels of air pollution and/or exposure to more extreme heat can increase a mother’s risk of poor birth outcomes, such as preterm labor or low birth weight. These outcomes at birth can contribute to serious health concerns for the baby and can put that child at risk for long-term health issues.

Children’s lungs are still developing and they breathe at a faster rate than adults, making them more likely to breathe in dangerous air pollutants that can cause damage to their lungs. Children are also very active and tend to play outdoors more than adults. This puts them at an increased risk of harm during extreme heat days and poor air quality days. We are also seeing an increased risk of disease carrying insects, such as mosquitoes and ticks, with climate change. While outdoor play is healthy and encouraged, this may lead to increased risk of exposure to these insects.

It is important that nurses and other health professionals who care for children, are aware of the health risks posed by climate change. Nurses care for children in hospitals, doctor’s offices, and in schools and can be instrumental in raising awareness to the unique vulnerabilities of children to climate change. By understanding the connection between climate and health, nurses can be adequately prepared to care for children affected by climate-related events and help families prevent harm.

While there is much to do to address climate change, there is also a great opportunity to take action to prevent harm to human health. Immediate and urgent action is needed to protect children from the dangers posed by climate. The Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments (ANHE) is working to educate nurses on the impacts of climate change on children’s health by developing educational resources and empowering nurses to educate their coworkers about health risks.

Nurses, as professionals caring for children and as experts on issues that impact health, can also support policies that reduce emissions that make climate change worse. The following are some specific actions nurses can take to address climate change and help ensure that children’s health is protected.
**Calls to Action:**

1. **Learn more:** Check out these resources to learn more about how climate change impacts children’s health and how nurses can reduce their climate impact within their workplaces, homes, and communities.
   - ANHE’s [Climate and Health Toolkit](#): An online repository of tools, resources, and more to support your climate leadership.
   - [Getting Started with Climate Solutions: A Guide for Nurses](#)—A concise and easy-to-use guide that provides nurses with ideas and resources to reduce their climate impact and inspire others to take action.

2. **Advocate:** Nurses can have the greatest impact by lending their voices and leadership to advocating for climate solutions. Join ANHE now in an effort to support clean air and climate protections by telling EPA not to weaken existing clean car standards. Nurses and nursing students can add your name or organization’s name to a [sign-on letter](#) in support of strong clean car standards.

3. **Take Action!** The Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments and Health Care Without Harm have launched the [Nurses Climate Challenge](#), a nationwide campaign to educate 5,000 health professionals on climate and health, with nurses leading the education. Nurses can register to become a Nurses Climate Champion at nursesclimatechallenge.org. As a Nurse Climate Champion you will have access to a variety of tools to use to educate and engage your colleagues in climate action.