Climate change is impacting human health in many ways: longer allergy seasons; more frequent and intense heat waves, hurricanes, droughts, and wildfires; and new habitats for disease-carrying insects like mosquitoes and ticks. Children are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. They are not little adults – their immune systems and organs are still developing. They take in more air per unit body weight and they are more sensitive to temperature changes.

Research indicates that children are estimated to bear 88% of the burden of climate change-related diseases globally. In addition to acute physical harm, climate change impacts children’s mental health and long-term well-being. For example, natural disasters can disrupt education by damaging or destroying schools, and children can exhibit symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder after extreme weather events because they fear losing control over an uncertain future. Socioeconomic factors further compound children’s risk: those living in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods are exposed to greater levels of air pollution and have less access to healthy infrastructure.

Fortunately, we can act now to address climate change, and to protect the well-being of our children at the same time. In the U.S., electricity and transportation are the two biggest sectors responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, making up about half of all emissions. Switching to 100% clean energy in our homes, businesses, vehicles, and healthcare centers will make it easier for children to breathe by reducing toxic air pollution, and will mitigate climate impacts.

**Climate for Health** is a national initiative led by a diverse network of health leaders from across the health sector representing key health care, public health, clinical, and medical institutions and associations. Committed to advancing climate solutions to protect the health and well-being of Americans, our leaders offer support, inspiration, and resources to health professionals ready to make their own commitment and build support for climate solutions.

Here are some immediate steps you can take to become a climate champion:

1. **Get Informed**
   
   ecoAmerica and Climate for Health provide research on climate impacts to human health, and on Americans’ awareness, understanding, and concern about climate change.

   The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children’s Environmental Health Network both have climate policy statements focusing on children’s unique vulnerabilities to climate change, and the American Public Health Association’s policy statement on children’s environmental health recognizes climate change as an important environmental health issue impacting our children. As part of its Year of Climate Change
and Health, the American Public Health Association hosted a webinar, “Climate Changes Children’s Health: Protecting Our Future,” which is archived and available online for viewing any time.

2. **Mitigate Your Climate Impact**
   Implement climate solutions by making the small changes in your everyday life that will make a big difference. Swap out a few car trips per week with active transportation alternatives, take energy efficiency initiatives like replacing your windows so you do not lose hot or cold air, and sign up with your energy provider to get your energy from wind and solar.

3. **Elevate Your Voice**
   Bring your message to your neighbors and your elected officials to help them understand climate solutions as an imperative for children’s health. ecoAmerica’s bimonthly Talking Points series can help you start a conversation on climate change with your friends, family, and colleagues. June’s Talking Points: Caring for Our Climate and Our Children, provide some background on children’s health and focus on reasons to care and act now. Let’s Talk Climate and Health, a communications guide from ecoAmerica and Climate for Health, also provides information on health impacts and messaging tips that you can use to write an Opinion Editorial (Op Ed) or Letter to the Editor to your local paper or give a speech at your next neighborhood association meeting.

4. **Stay Engaged**
   It takes a village. Subscribe to the Climate for Health newsletter to stay informed and engaged on climate change publications and events. Make sure to join the CEH Movement and lend your voice to protect children’s health.