



CHILDREN'S
ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH
NETWORK

CLIMATE CHANGE

Impacts on Children's Health & Equity in the U.S.



Physical injury & death

Climate change intensifies extreme weather events such as heat waves, hurricanes and flooding, and causes increased frequency and severity of wildfires.

Children are more likely to be injured or killed in these climate disasters due to their size, mobility, dependence on caretakers, and other unique physiological and behavioral traits.

Young athletes are especially vulnerable to heat illness which can become life-threatening.

Displacement

Thousands of U.S. children have been displaced as a result of hurricanes, flooding, and wildfires over the past decade. As a result of Hurricane Katrina (2005), approximately 372,000 children, most of whom were Black and poor, were forced to relocate. Many have not been able to return to this day.



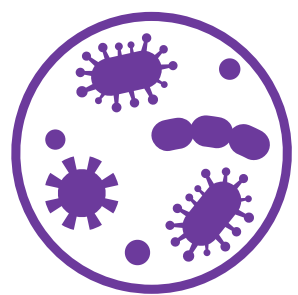
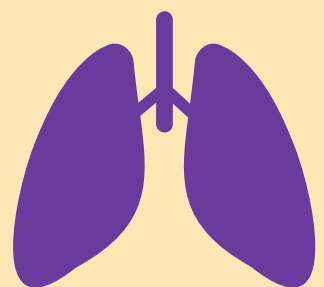
Mental health

Climate disasters can result in the loss of loved ones, homes, friends, community, routines, and sense of stability. This increases children's risk for mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Mental health implications are especially concerning for those children who are already at higher risk, such as those living in under-resourced areas.

Respiratory illness exacerbation

Warming temperatures create more smog and lead to longer and more intense pollen seasons—both of which worsens asthma symptoms.

Stronger and more frequent wildfires expose children to high levels of high levels of tiny particles in the air that can lodge deep in their lungs and cause or worsen respiratory illness. Black children are already ten times more likely to die from asthma than non-Hispanic white children.



Infectious disease

Increasing temperatures and climate disasters cause increased food and water-borne illnesses (such as E.coli and Salmonella), due to flooding, structural damage, and power loss. Altered patterns of rainfall can increase the prevalence of mosquitoes, ticks and other disease vectors for illnesses such as Lyme disease, Dengue Fever, West Nile Fever, and Zika.

Food insecurity

Disasters increase food insecurity for many children, as communities may be cut off from food deliveries, parents may face unpaid time off, and school closures disrupt free or reduced-price meal programs.

Also, power outages lead to food spoilage and may leave stores unable to process Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program debit-like cards.



Disrupted services, treatment & education

Climate disasters destroy or threaten access to critical resources and services, especially in under-resourced communities.

Children remaining in or returning to the community may face disrupted education or other services, and children with medical conditions may lose access to medication, treatment, and care.