

Climate and Health Resources: WASHINGTON



Climate change poses risks to human health. [Already in the United States](#), we are seeing rising temperatures, increased frequency and intensity of some types of extreme weather, sea level rise, and other changes in weather and climate patterns. We are all vulnerable to the health impacts associated with climate change. However, these climate and health risks vary across the country.

Over the past century, most of Washington has warmed 1°F to 2°F. This and other climate impacts, like more intense wildfires, mean increasing risks to health. Examples of risks and actions for Washington residents include:

- **Large wildfires are occurring more often, and wildfire seasons are lasting longer.** This increases health risks such as those related to smoke inhalation and evacuations. [Learn how you can take action to protect against wildfires](#), such as:
 - **Prepare:** Keep your air-conditioning filter clean, and close the unit's fresh air intake.
 - **Respond:** Check local news and reports for information on air quality, visibility, and evacuation orders.

- **More floods will occur in some mountain watersheds.** Floods can lead to illness, injury, and deaths. [Learn how you can take action to protect against floods](#), such as:
 - **Respond:** Fill bathtubs, sinks, and plastic containers with clean water.
 - **Respond:** Avoid driving or walking in or near flood waters, even after the flood or during cleanup.

- **Harmful algal blooms that contaminate shellfish have become more frequent** along the Pacific Northwest coast and estuaries. Rising temperatures will lengthen the season for harmful blooms in the Puget Sound. This especially affects tribes that traditionally depend on shellfish harvests. [Learn how you can take action to ensure food safety](#), such as:
 - **Prepare:** Check for beach closures or health department notices before swimming, fishing, or harvesting shellfish.
 - **Respond:** Keep seafood chilled to less than 38°F. Discard any perishable food if your refrigerator has lost power for longer than four hours.

Learn more in the [USGCRP Climate and Health Assessment](#).

The examples of risks and actions provided in this document are not a comprehensive list. They provide users with illustrative impacts and resources for further information. Examples were selected based on relevance to the state or region and representation of a diversity of health threats. Selection does not imply ranking of severity of impacts nor prioritization of actions. The examples of impacts are based on "The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment," available at <https://health2016.globalchange.gov>, as well as the National Climate Assessment at <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/>

RESOURCES FOR WASHINGTON RESIDENTS

Resource Topic	Information	Source
Climate Change Impacts	Learn More: What Climate Change Means for Washington	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
	Learn More: National Climate Assessment: Northwest	U.S. Global Change Research Program. 2014.
	Explore Actions: Preparing for a Changing Climate: Washington State's Integrated Climate Response Strategy, 2012 <i>Includes Health Concerns for: Coastal Flooding, Inland Flooding, Extreme Heat, Wildfire, Drought</i>	State of Washington Department of Ecology. 2012.
	Explore Actions: King County Strategic Climate Action Plan - 2015 Update	King County, Washington. November 2015.
	Explore Actions: Swinomish Climate Change Initiative Climate Adaptation Action Plan	Swinomish Indian Tribal Community Office of Planning and Community Development. October 2010.
	Find Resources: EPA Region 10 (Pacific Northwest)	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Public Health Information	Find Resources: Washington State Department of Health	State of Washington
	Find Resources: Washington Emergency Management Division	State of Washington