

Climate and Health Resources: WEST VIRGINIA



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.

Most of West Virginia has warmed 0.5°F to 1°F in the last century and heavy rainstorms are becoming more frequent. These, and other climate impacts, mean increasing risks to health. Examples of risks and actions for West Virginia residents include:

- **Higher temperatures and other changes will increase levels of ozone pollution** (a component of smog), increasing health risks like asthma-related hospital visits. [Learn how you can take action to protect against poor air quality](#), such as:
 - **Prepare:** Check the news and [airnow.gov](#) for local air quality reports.
 - **Respond:** Reduce outdoor activity when pollution levels are high.

- **Longer warm seasons mean that ticks carrying Lyme disease will emerge earlier in the season and move into new areas.** [Learn how you can take action to protect against ticks](#), such as:
 - **Respond:** Check for and remove ticks promptly after coming indoors. Remember that pets may bring ticks into the house.
 - **Respond:** Wear protective clothing (such as high boots and long sleeves and pants), and consider using insect repellent.

- **More intense rain can overwhelm combined sewer systems** (where storm water and sewage share pipes). This can contaminate recreational water and sources of drinking water and lead to disease outbreaks. [Learn how you can take action to ensure drinking water safety](#), such as:
 - **Prepare:** Have an emergency water supply ready for your family (1 gallon per person/pet per day).
 - **Respond:** Check the news for tap water safety notices, such as boiling water before use.

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 WEST VIRGINIA RESIDENTS

Resource Topic	Information	Source
Climate Change Impacts	Learn More: What Climate Change Means for West Virginia	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
	Learn More: National Climate Assessment: Northeast	U.S. Global Change Research Program. 2014.
	Find Resources: EPA Region 3 (Mid-Atlantic)	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Public Health Information	Find Resources: West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources	State of West Virginia
	Find Resources: West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management	State of West Virginia