

What are the health effects of climate change?



Access to food: Increased obesity, diabetes and heart disease from changes to diets because of reduced availability of country/traditional foods (fish, meat, plants).



Agriculture: Warmer temperatures with increased precipitation might benefit local agriculture and forestry. By improving access to healthy food and increasing employment income, this could be a benefit to health.



Air pollution: Increased lung and heart disease from greater air pollution caused by wildland fires.



Disasters: Increased impacts of mental health issues, injuries and deaths from more frequent avalanches, landslides, dangerous travelling conditions, floods, unpredictable weather and wildland fires.



Extreme weather: Increase of lung and heart disease, injuries and death related to heat or cold waves or extreme weather events.



Melting permafrost: Increased impacts of mental health issues and injuries from damage to buildings and infrastructure because of reduced permafrost or increased erosion.



New pests and diseases: Spread of diseases carried by mosquitoes, ticks and other animals; increased risk of wildland fires from stressed ecosystems.



Ultraviolet (UV) radiation: Increased risk of various conditions associated with sun exposure such as skin cancer and eye damage (cataracts).



Water availability and quality: Increased waterborne diseases (infections carried by water) because of impacts on water bodies and damage to infrastructure.



Climate Change and Health IMPACTS AND ACTIONS



Learn more by visiting the web page
Climate change in Yukon on Yukon.ca

Yukon

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The climate in Yukon is changing. In the last 50 years, average temperatures have increased by 2°C, with winters warming even more. Over this time average yearly precipitation has increased by six per cent. This change is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

The major climate change hazards in Yukon include floods, wildfires, and damage to infrastructure from thawing permafrost and extreme precipitation.

HOW CAN CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECT YOUR HEALTH?

Climate change can have both direct and indirect impacts on your health. Direct impacts include impacts of extreme weather. Indirect impacts are the health effects that occur because of the impacts climate change has on the environment.

What makes a climate-resilient community?

There are various things that can help make a community less prone to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Building climate-resilient communities

A healthy community provides the foundation on which to build a climate-resilient community. A healthy community provides:

- A clean and safe physical environment, including clean air and clean water;
- Peace, equity and social justice;
- Adequate access to food, water, shelter, income, safety, work and recreation for all;
- Adequate access to health care services;
- Opportunities for learning and skill development;
- Strong, mutually supportive relationships and networks;
- Workplaces that are supportive of individual and family well-being;
- Wide participation of residents in decision-making;
- Strong local cultural and spiritual heritage;
- A diverse and vital economy;
- Protection of the natural environment;
- Responsible use of resources to ensure long-term sustainability.

Get more information on how to protect your health during floods or smoke from wildland fires by visiting:

<https://yukon.ca/en/emergencies-and-safety>

What can be done to reduce health impacts?

By being better prepared and adapting to changing conditions, communities and individuals can reduce the negative impacts of climate change on health.



Fire smarting: FireSmart is a program to help make [communities](#), buildings and [homes](#) less prone to damage from a wildland fire. Among other things it involves choosing fire-resistant building materials and management of the landscape around buildings to reduce the risk of fire. (For more information see <https://www.firesmartcanada.ca/> or e-mail FireSmart@gov.yk.ca)



Flood proofing: Design communities and buildings so that they are less likely to be damaged by flooding. This includes working with nature to manage flood waters, limiting development in floodplains, and building structures that are less likely to be damaged by floods. (More information is available from [Environment and Climate Change Canada](#).)



Being ready: Make an emergency kit. You will need basic supplies for every member of your household in an emergency. Be [prepared](#) to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours without power or running water. By being prepared, you can help reduce the negative impacts related to a flood or fire in your community.



Support networks: The presence of social networks and social support is a core element of a resilient community. A supportive social network of family, friends, colleagues, and service providers help an individual cope during hard times and help people and the community to “bounce back” and “move forward”. A resilient community seeks out those who may need greater support because of disability, health, or other vulnerabilities and provides assistance when required.



Access to health services: e-Health, Telehealth and providing health services in buildings designed to withstand climate extremes can improve access to health services during climate change-related emergencies.



Low-carbon community: To minimize the severity of climate change, it is also important to reduce the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. This includes energy conservation and the use of renewable energy. Factors that help make a healthy and resilient community include:

- Building new structures to green standards and retrofitting older buildings.
- Designing and building transportation infrastructure to improve the safety and convenience of walking and cycling.
- Clustering workplaces, shops, schools, services, and homes making it easier to get to places on foot or bicycle. This grouping of different uses makes it easier to include physical activity as part of daily living and to provide transit or bus services, which reduces the need for private transportation.
- Local food production that will improve access to healthy food.
- Aiming for zero waste to reduce a person’s and community’s ecological and carbon footprint.

