

Climate and Health Resources: ALASKA



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.

Alaska has warmed twice as fast as the rest of the nation. This and other climate impacts mean increasing risks to health. Examples of risks and actions for Alaskans include:

- **Permafrost (soil that stays frozen all year) will thaw**, and resulting runoff may pollute food and drinking water sources. [Learn how you can take actions to ensure drinking water safety](#), such as:
 - **Prepare:** Have an emergency water supply ready for your family (1 gallon per person/pet per day).
 - **Prepare:** Check the news for tap water safety notices, such as boiling water before use.

- **Increasing levels of harmful algae and bacteria in coastal waters may make eating fish and shellfish less safe.** These contaminants cause infections or stomach illnesses. [Learn how you can take actions to ensure food safety](#), such as:
 - **Prepare:** Check for health department notices before 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.

- **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 actions to protect against wildfires](#), such as:
 - **Prepare:** Follow your doctor's instructions for managing existing lung diseases and medicines.
 - **Respond:** Check local news and reports for information on air quality, visibility, and evacuation orders.

Learn more about climate impacts on health 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 ALASKANS

Resource Topic	Information	Source
Climate Change Impacts	Learn more: What Climate Change Means for Alaska	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
	Learn more: National Climate Assessment: Alaska	U.S. Global Change Research Program. 2014.
	Explore Actions: Alaska's Climate Change Strategy: Addressing Impacts in Alaska, 2010 (Includes Health Concerns for: Coastal Flooding, Extreme Heat, Wildfire)	State of Alaska
	Explore Actions: City of Homer, Alaska Climate Action Plan	City of Homer. 2007.
	Find Resources: EPA Region 10 (Pacific Northwest)	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Public Health Information	Find Resources: Alaska Department of Health and Social Services	State of Alaska
	Find Resources: Contact the Division of Public Health	State of Alaska
	Find Resources: Find your Alaska Public Health Center for help on contaminated water and other disrupted infrastructure	State of Alaska
	Find Resources: Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management	State of Alaska
Climate and Health Resources	Explore Actions: Climate Change in Alaska. Adaptation Advisory Group. Appendix H: Health and Culture Technical Work Group Recommended Adaptation Options	State of Alaska. January 2010.
	Explore Actions: Climate Change in Alaska. Adaptation Advisory Group. Chapter 7. Health and Culture	State of Alaska. January 2010.