

THE ROLE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Health professionals are a key ally in communicating climate change to the public. Through our various touch points in all areas of the community, we represent a trusted voice and interact with people who may not otherwise be engaged in climate change. We may be the first person someone turns to with questions about their health and the changing climate. We can use these moments to educate the public on the steps we can take to protect ourselves, and how we can all lower GHG emissions.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Educate yourself and your patients

- Start a conversation about the health benefits of adapting to climate change. Many adaptations (for example active transportation to reduce GHG emissions) have immediate health co-benefits (e.g. increased exercise)
- Provide a trusted voice to your patients, confirming that climate change is happening in NB
- Make changes in your own life and advise your patients to do the same

JOIN THE FREE HPACC NETWORK

- Join a community of like-minded health professionals for dialogue and support
- Receive NB climate and health information
- Have access to free and easy to use resources available at: nb.lung.ca/climate-change
- Receive training so that you can take action on climate change in professional settings

Health Professionals for Action on Climate Change hosted by - New Brunswick Lung Association

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B R E A T H E
the lung association

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Health Professionals for Action on Climate Change

HUMAN HEALTH & CLIMATE CHANGE



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HUMAN HEALTH & CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change has been deemed the greatest public health threat of our time, affecting respiratory and cardiovascular health, mental well-being, increasing instances of vector-borne diseases, and harm from extreme weather events.



CLIMATE CHANGE IN NEW BRUNSWICK

In New Brunswick we have seen increased severe storms, flooding, wildfires and hotter days. Climate scientists are certain that the current rapid changes in climate are caused by human actions. Our use of fossil fuels and intense agriculture has caused a build-up of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere, causing the temperature to rise. In NB the temperatures have already increased by 1.5°C compared to historical records, which is twice the global average.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Air Quality

As the climate changes, the air we breathe becomes more humid and holds more particles than it would before. We are now breathing in more particles from fires, fuel emissions and more. This increases our risk of cardiovascular disease, respiratory illnesses, lung cancer, and preterm birth.

Heat

The number of extreme heat days in NB is expected to increase dramatically over the next few decades, with all regions experiencing 2-3 times more extreme heat days than in the past. This puts New Brunswickers at increased risk of heat stroke, heat exhaustion and dehydration.

Vector Borne Diseases

The increased temperature in NB is resulting in increased prevalence of vector borne disease. Black-legged ticks carrying Lyme disease are on the rise in our province.

Extreme Weather

NB will see a 6-7% increase in precipitation compared to 2005, increasing the frequency and severity of major flood events. This and other extreme weather events, like ice and wind storms, cause power outages and contamination from flood water which puts people at risk of hypothermia, heat exhaustion, loss of food, and infection.

Mental Health

Climate Change also impacts the mental health of New Brunswickers. Especially in young people eco-anxiety is becoming common. Other mental health impacts include increases in depression, strains in relationships, PTSD, aggression, feelings of helplessness and fatalism.



HPACC

HPACC was initiated by the New Brunswick Lung Association to support health professionals in educating and treating patients and clients. The network is free to join. The network provides educational resources tailored to your busy schedule that may help you provide education for your patients and clients, for example: webinars, brochures, posters and tear pads containing information on climate change impacts on human health and the steps we can take to protect ourselves.