

Environmental Health Report November-December 2017 Climate Change, continued

An explosion of the tick population. The spread of subtropical mosquito species to the Northeast. A huge increase in poison ivy growth. Loss of land to encroaching seas. Extremes of temperature. Increased fire and drought risk. An increase in the number and strength of storms.

Regardless of your willingness to accept human activity as the primary factor driving global warming, there is no doubt that temperatures around the globe are rising, and that fact will have huge implications for the health of the planet and human well-being. A short column can only be an introduction to this very complex issue and I recommend further reading to supplement what you learn here.

In a surprising development, the current administration released a report in November that acknowledges mankind's role as primary in causing climate change. It can be accessed here: <https://science2017.globalchange.gov/>. In previous articles, I discussed rising sea levels and the implications for coastal communities and island nations. There are islands in the Pacific

that are losing land mass because of rising sea levels at an alarming rate and displacing human habitation. Florida is raising the level of streets in Miami Beach at a cost of \$100 million and this is only a small part of a much larger initiative. In NYC, there is a major street-raising project in Broad Channel, Queens. Scientists are worried about the spread of disease from tropical and sub-tropical regions to temperate climates such as ours. West Nile, Zika, Chikungunya, and Dengue fever are viruses whose spread is linked to global warming. Parasites and bacterial infections like cholera and leishmaniasis have also expanded their range.

The city is about to spend \$100 million over the next two years to raise roads, install stormwater pumps and upgrade sewer connections in the La Gorce and Lakeview neighborhoods in Middle Beach.



We all feel impotent with respect to climate change, but here is a list of ten action items that are within our reach to help ameliorate global warming:

1. Cut your use of fossil fuels. Take public transportation when possible. Walk. Ride your bike.
2. Buy a more fuel-efficient car: hybrid, electric or gas.
3. Eat less meat. Livestock produce methane, a greenhouse gas and meat production is less energy efficient than vegetable farming. Raising fewer animals for food is better for the planet.
4. Replace worn-out appliances with energy-star-certified models to reduce energy use.
5. Conserve water. Energy is used to heat, purify, and transport water.
6. Eat the food you buy. Wasted food also wastes the energy used in its production.
7. Weatherize your home. Keep your home comfortable with less energy use.
8. Compost your fruit and vegetable waste, and improve your garden.
9. Vote for candidates that acknowledge and support initiatives to fight global warming.
10. Sign up for emails and join an organization that will keep you informed, such as The Sierra Club (www.SierraClub.org), the Natural Resources Defense Council (www.NRDC.org), Food and Water Watch (www.-FoodandWaterWatch.org) or the Environmental Working Group (www.EWG.org), among many others.

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