

We use cookies to personalize content and ads, to provide social media features and to analyze our traffic. We also share information about your use of our site with our social media, advertising and analytics partners.

[Privacy Policy](#)

> [Cookie Settings](#)

✓ [Accept Cookies](#)

# E&E NEWS

CLIMATE

## Children Are Particularly Vulnerable to Climate Change's Health Impacts

Global warming is already affecting public health, and efforts to address the problem are inadequate, a new report says

By Maya Earls, E&E News on November 14, 2019



We use cookies to personalize content and ads, to provide social media features and to analyze our traffic. We also share information about your use of our site with our social media, advertising and analytics partners.

[Privacy Policy](#)

> [Cookie Settings](#)

✓ [Accept Cookies](#)

new era of climate change will "define the health of an entire generation" — unless there is significant intervention.

The health impacts flagged by the report start at the prenatal level with a heightened risk of low birth weight and neonatal death and continue through childhood and adolescence with potential lung problems, asthma attacks and insect-borne diseases. Older adults would see increasing vulnerability from extreme heat.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

The report is a collaborative effort by more than 100 experts from global institutions, including the World Health Organization and World Bank, that tracks the impact of climate change on human health based on 41 indicators.

Dr. Richard Carmona, the former U.S. surgeon general and professor at the University of Arizona, said the report shows climate change is already upon us.

"There is nobody in this world today that isn't suffering some form of the impact of climate change," he said.

Last year was the fourth hottest year on record. As a result, the report says a record-breaking 220 million additional people aged 65 and older were exposed to extreme heat. Japan saw 32 million of its elderly exposed to extreme heat, the equivalent of almost every person in that age group experiencing a heat wave.

We use cookies to personalize content and ads, to provide social media features and to analyze our traffic. We also share information about your use of our site with our social media, advertising and analytics partners.

[Privacy Policy](#)

> [Cookie Settings](#)

✓ [Accept Cookies](#)

rose by 3.1% in 2018 — the largest increase in emissions since 2010.

Dr. Renee Salas, the lead author of the report's U.S. policy brief, said cities are recognizing that climate change is affecting their residents' health. Nearly two-thirds of 136 cities surveyed in the report last year have completed climate risk assessments or are doing so.

But Salas said funding is "grossly inadequate" for the challenges ahead. Moreover, she said, the health care costs of climate change are often left out when it comes to discussing climate action.



Sign up for *Scientific American's* free newsletters.

[Sign Up](#)

---

"Climate action is action to improve health," she said. "Those are directly correlated, and we know that action on climate change is going to inevitably reduce health care costs."

While the benefits of climate action varied by region, the report noted a study that found the health savings from renewable energy policy in the Rust Belt region exceeded the policy cost by 34%. The report said that if the current emissions trajectory continues, then children, particularly children of color, will face billions of dollars in health-related costs throughout their lives.

We use cookies to personalize content and ads, to provide social media features and to analyze our traffic. We also share information about your use of our site with our social media, advertising and analytics partners.

[Privacy Policy](#)

> [Cookie Settings](#)

✓ [Accept Cookies](#)

Salas echoed his sentiments, saying solutions that include shifting toward clean energy are available, but political will is lacking.

Solutions outlined in the report include putting a price on carbon emissions, transitioning to cleaner transportation fuels, and boosting spending on adaptation in health and health care.

"The evidence clearly shows that treatment is available," she said. "We just need to act before it's too late."

ADVERTISEMENT

*Reprinted from Climatewire with permission from E&E News. E&E provides daily coverage of essential energy and environmental news at [www.eenews.net](http://www.eenews.net).*

---

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)

### Maya Earls

#### Recent Articles

If Emissions Continue, India Could See 1 Million Heat Deaths a Year

We use cookies to personalize content and ads, to provide social media features and to analyze our traffic. We also share information about your use of our site with our social media, advertising and analytics partners.

[Privacy Policy](#)

> [Cookie Settings](#)

✓ [Accept Cookies](#)

### Recent Articles

European Investment Bank Will Stop Lending to Fossil Fuel Projects

Are Blackouts Here to Stay? A Look into the Future

Democratic Presidential Contenders Chart Different Paths to Clean Energy

## READ THIS NEXT

### SPONSORED CONTENT

Self-driving cars to test city limits

October 30, 2019

---

### MEDICINE

Some Relief for Test Anxiety Is Found in an Unusual Treatment

0 minute ago — Cindi May

---

### SPACE

When We Finally Find Aliens, They Might Smell Terrible

1 hour ago — Clara Sousa-Silva | Opinion

---

### THE BODY

---

We use cookies to personalize content and ads, to provide social media features and to analyze our traffic. We also share information about your use of our site with our social media, advertising and analytics partners.

[Privacy Policy](#)

> [Cookie Settings](#)

✓ [Accept Cookies](#)

---

## NEWSLETTER

*Get smart. Sign up for our email newsletter.*

Sign Up

---

*Expertise. Insights. Illumination.*

Subscribe Now!

FOLLOW US

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN ARABIC

We use cookies to personalize content and ads, to provide social media features and to analyze our traffic. We also share information about your use of our site with our social media, advertising and analytics partners.

[Privacy Policy](#)

> [Cookie Settings](#)

✓ [Accept Cookies](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

[International Editions](#)

Scientific American is part of Springer Nature, which owns or has commercial relations with thousands of scientific publications (many of them can be found at [www.springernature.com/us](http://www.springernature.com/us)). Scientific American maintains a strict policy of editorial independence in reporting developments in science to our readers.

© 2019 SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, A DIVISION OF SPRINGER NATURE AMERICA, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.