

Impacts of Climate Change on Children

~A guide for pediatricians~

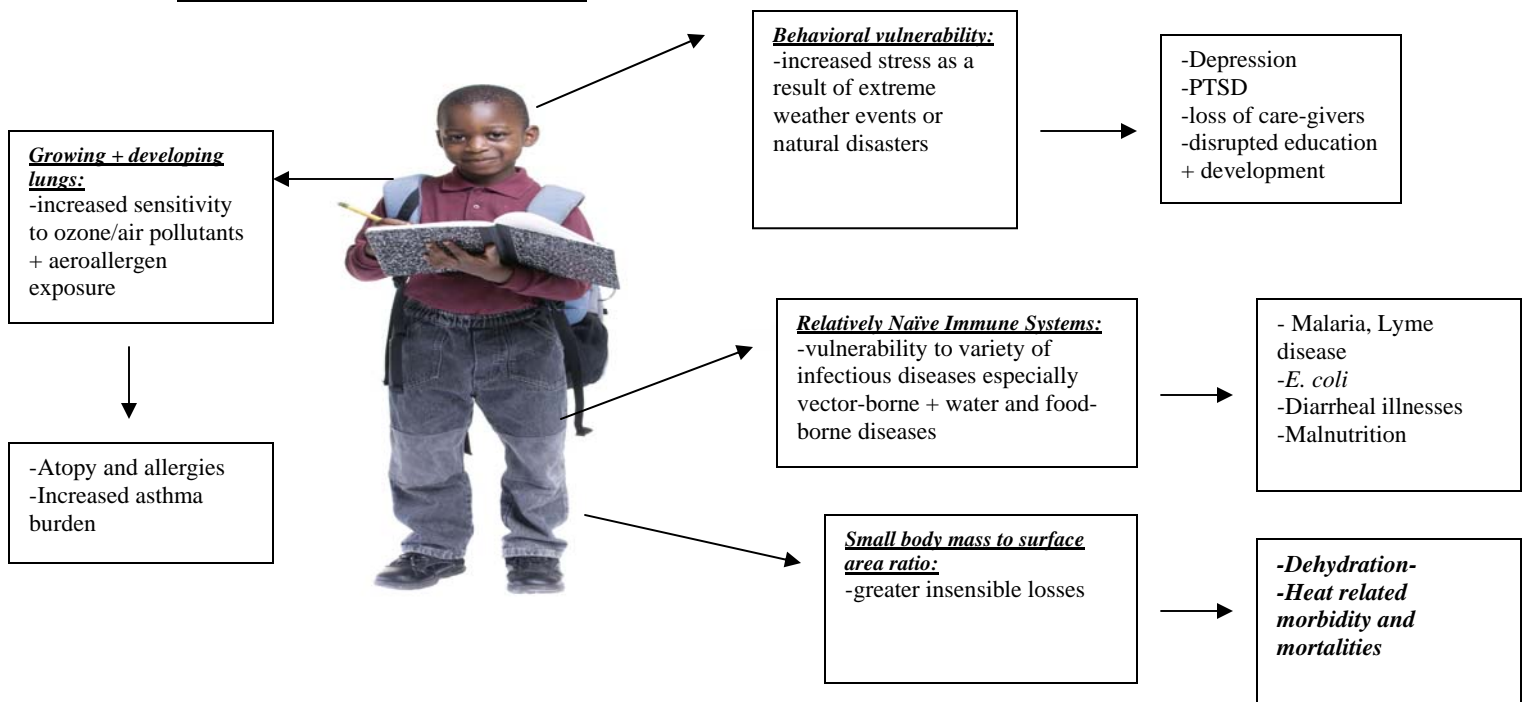
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FASTFACT: *Our earth is undergoing rapidly accelerating climate changes largely linked to human activity. These changes are predicted to have their greatest impact on the most vulnerable sections of our population, namely children, who will suffer disproportionately from both direct and indirect adverse health effects of climate change.*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Global surface temperatures have increased approximately 1 degree per century, since 1976, though; this trend has become times larger
- Global warming has been attributed largely to human activity mainly the burning of fossil fuels is believed to increase atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases.
- Environmental effects of warming include extreme weather events/natural disasters, increased temperatures, disruption of ecosystems, rising sea levels/receding coast lines

WHY ARE CHILDREN AT RISK?



LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE:

- Decreased food and fresh- water availability→ malnutrition→ resultant medical complications
- Population displacement secondary to rising sea levels, climate changes and natural disasters→unstable infra-structure

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. Inform patients + families about the health affects associated with climate change
2. Encourage families to cut down on automobile emissions by walking, biking, car-pooling or taking public transportation.
3. Advocate in your local government for policies addressing climate change
4. Work with community centers and schools to encourage more environmentally responsible behaviors
5. Identify health hazards in the community + work with public health organizations to solve them
6. Continue to educate yourself about the links between child health and climate change

Useful Web-links:

<http://www.aap.org/visit/cmtel6.htm>

<http://www.aoc.org/PEHSU>

Resources:

1. Ebi, K, Paulson, J. Climate change and child health in the United States. *Curr Probl Pediatr Adolesc Health Care* 2010
2. AAP.Global climate change and children's health. *Pediatrics* 2007
3. Balbus, J, Malina, C. Identifying vulnerable subpopulations for climate change health effects in the US. *J Occup Environ Med.* 2009