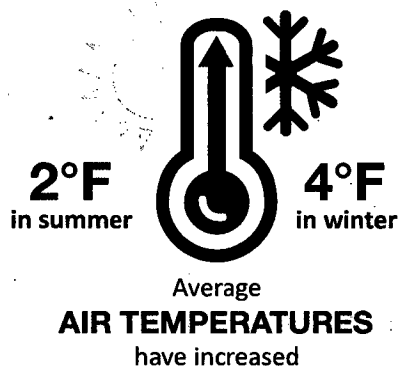


# CLIMATE CHANGE + YOUR HEALTH

**NEARLY 100% OF CLIMATE SCIENTISTS AGREE:**  
Greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel combustion in cars, power production, and manufacturing are causing the temperature of the earth to rise.

Climate change is real and has already affected Vermont.

## IN THE PAST 50 YEARS:



**2**  
weeks

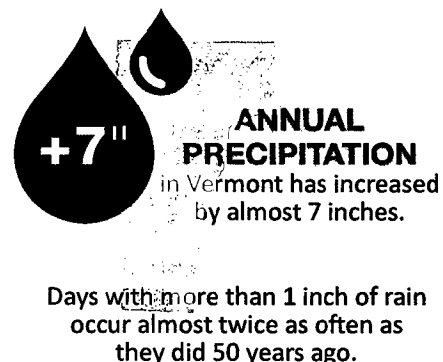


**SPRING**  
now arrives  
two weeks  
earlier



**1**  
week

**WINTER**  
starts  
one week  
later



## CLIMATE CHANGE INCREASES HEALTH RISKS FOR VERMONTERS

**87°F**

Summer heat can cause sickness and death. On days when the average statewide temperature reaches at least 87°F, **EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS** for heat-related complaints are **8 times more likely.**

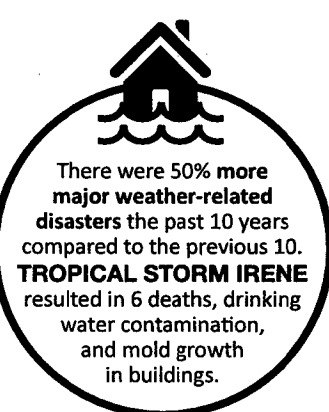


Lake Champlain temperatures increased by 2-7°F in the past 50 years.

Warm water and runoff from heavy rains can fuel **CYANOBACTERIA BLOOMS** (blue-green algae) in lakes and ponds, especially during summer on calm, sunny days in nutrient-rich bays. Blooms can cause skin irritation and other allergy-like symptoms and may release toxins that cause flu-like symptoms if swallowed.



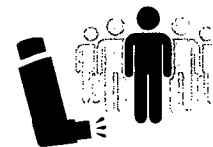
Heavy rains can send contaminated runoff into drinking and recreational waters. From 2005–2014, Vermont averaged **500+ reported CASES OF WATER OR FOODBORNE ILLNESS** each year, with more cases reported after heavy rains, although it's assumed that many more cases are never reported.



Warmer conditions have contributed to increased **black-legged (deer) TICK POPULATIONS** and lengthened their active season.



In 2015, Vermont had the highest number of **LYME DISEASE** cases per capita in the U.S.



A longer growing season and more carbon dioxide in the air increases pollen, which can cause seasonal allergies and **ASTHMA ATTACKS**. **11% of adults in Vermont** report having asthma and **8% suffer from hay fever.**

Vermont is expected to continue warming in the future, leading to hotter summers, shorter and milder winters, stronger storms, and more frequent droughts.

## WHO IS AT RISK?

In Vermont, everyone is at risk for climate-related health effects. Severe weather, illness, stress and anxiety can affect anyone in any location. There are some groups in Vermont whose health is especially vulnerable.



- **People who spend a lot of time outdoors**
  - Outdoor workers, athletes, and hobbyists
  - Homeless people
  - Those living in flood prone locations or valleys with poor air quality
- **People with health sensitivities**
  - Elderly adults
  - Infants and children
  - Those with chronic medical conditions
- **People with limited financial and social resources for reducing risk**

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Once you have identified the ways that you, your family, and members of your community are at risk from climate-related health impacts, take actions to reduce these risks and give care to others when needed.



Some possible actions include:



Take steps to **LOWER YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT** while helping your health:

- Walk and bike instead of driving for short trips.
- If possible, grow your own food or shop for fresh, local, and nutritious food.
- Improve indoor comfort and lower energy costs by sealing air leaks and using window coverings and shade plants to keep your home cool in summer.



**ON HOT DAYS**, drink extra fluids, avoid strenuous outdoor activities, and stay in cool, shady places.



**AVOID TICK AND MOSQUITO BITES** by covering exposed skin and using EPA-registered repellents.



**CHECK YOUR BODY FOR TICKS** at least once on days after being in grassy or wooded areas.



**PREPARE FOR STORMS AND FLOODS** with a household emergency plan and emergency supply kit. Learn how to stay safe after a flood or during a power outage.



Stay out of lakes, ponds, and streams for **48 HOURS AFTER HEAVY RAINS** because runoff could contaminate waterways. Recent heavy rains can also make streams fast and dangerous for swimming.



**LEARN HOW TO IDENTIFY CYANOBACTERIA** (blue-green algae) and see where blooms have been reported on the Cyanobacteria Tracker.



**WATCH AIR QUALITY FORECASTS** and reduce outdoor activity on days when pollen, ozone, or particulate matter levels are high.



**CHECK-IN** on family, friends, and neighbors that may be at high risk for climate-related health impacts.

To learn more about these and other actions you can take to prevent climate-related health impacts, please visit <http://healthvermont.gov/environment/climate/take-action>

**STAY IN TOUCH**

By taking action to reduce climate change and to prevent health impacts associated with climate change, you can improve your health today and help ensure a healthier future for all Vermonters!

We'll be continuing the conversation about environmental health issues in the coming months. If you have questions, visit <http://healthvermont.gov/environment/climate> or contact [ClimateHealth@vermont.gov](mailto:ClimateHealth@vermont.gov).