Climate Change and Health in Central New York

Climate Change and Health
Changes in the climate have an influence on health, both directly and indirectly. These changes can affect the frequency of severe weather events, the availability of food and clean water, and the occurrence of certain infectious diseases. Additionally, climate change can raise health risks for people with various health conditions, children and older adults, and those living in areas prone to flooding.

Did you know?
There are actions that communities can take to protect health in the presence of climate change.

Number of Extreme Heat Days
(# of extreme heat days per year)

Extreme heat days are defined as days in which the daily maximum temperature exceeded the 90th percentile threshold.

Percentiles are calculated by creating an average county-level estimate of the daily maximum temperature, specific to that county and summer months across all available years of data (1979-present).

This measure was only calculated for the months of May through September.

Total County Days Above 90°F in Central New York

Source: NYS Department of Health County Heat and Health Profile Reports, 1980-2014
Climate Change in New York State

An overall warming trend and more frequent extreme weather events have been observed in New York State. To help protect and promote health, the New York State Prevention Agenda 2019-2024 identifies several strategies that communities can implement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change.

These strategies include becoming a certified Climate Smart Community, enhancing active transportation infrastructure, and encouraging alternative modes of transportation (e.g. public transportation, carpool, biking, walking) or telecommuting. Additionally, identifying and promoting cooling centers to those who do not have air-conditioning and need a cool place to go during a heat event can reduce heat-related morbidity and mortality.

Changes in New York State’s Climate

- Annual average temperatures have increased by over 2°F since 1970
- Annual average winter temperatures are over 4°F warmer since 1970
- Coastal sea level has risen by about one foot since 1900
- Heavy rain downpours have increased in recent decades

NYS Department of Health, 2017

Months of Mild Drought or Worse

(# of months per year in which there was mild drought or worse)

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network, 2013-2016

Measures are based on Standardized Precipitation Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI).

SPEI values range from -3 (dry) to +3 (wet) based on the number of standard deviations from the 1981-2000 normal climate period.

Mild drought or worse is any value less than 0.

Find more weather and climate data on HealtheCNY.org/ClimateDashboard