

6 What can I do to help reduce the adverse health impacts from climate change?



Act Now!

Buy energy efficient appliances: Make informed choices. If you're buying a washing machine, refrigerator, dish-washer or oven, buy the most energy-efficient model you can afford. They might be more expensive but they pay for themselves through lower energy bills. The same is true for procurement of office equipment, such as computers, photocopiers and printers.

Calculate your personal carbon footprint and cut your greenhouse gas emissions. Take it at 3w.earthday.net/footprint/info.asp or at <http://www.carbonfootprint.com/>

Debate, discuss, and distribute leaflets, brochures and posters on climate change and environmental health issues. Useful information is available at: 3w.unep.org/wed/2007/english/; <http://unfccc.int/>; 3w.who.int/globalchange/climate/en/index.html; www.climatecrisis.net/

Enjoy the sun! Fit solar panels on the roof of your home. Why not turn your home and/or office into a clean power station! Solar power is renewable and plentiful!

Fridge: Don't leave fridge doors open for longer than necessary; let foods cool down fully before placing it in the fridge or freezer; defrost regularly and keep the

appliance at the right temperature. Where possible, don't place cookers and fridges/freezers next to each other.

Go Green! If you have to buy a car, buy a fuel-efficient, environmentally friendly one. This will save you money and keep more CO₂ from going into the atmosphere. Make sure that your tires are inflated correctly—this can save you 5% on the cost of your petrol. Share car journeys with your work colleagues or friends. Make more use of public transport, such as metro, and train for longer journeys. For short trips and local shopping, try walking or use a bicycle. It keeps you fit and is fun too! More at: 3w.worldwildlife.org/climate/involved/individuals.cfm

Half your emissions moving your air conditioner thermostat up by 5 degrees Celsius in summer. Almost half of the energy we use in our homes goes to cooling. Maintain the filters on your air conditioners cleaning them regularly. A clean air filter can save pounds of carbon dioxide a year. More at: 3w.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/climate-change/take_action

Involve your family, friends, children and neighbors!

Join an environmental group. Find out what action groups are doing around your locality or region; if there are no groups, start one!

Kick start an environmental campaign in your neighborhood.

Lamps: Replace the bulbs you use most with compact fluorescent lamps or CFL bulbs. They cost more than ordinary lamps but you end up saving money because they use only about one-quarter of the electricity to provide the same light. And they last four times longer than normal light bulbs! More information on CFL at: http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr_cfls

Minimize the use of toxic chemicals. Use non-toxic, biodegradable, water or plant based paints, cleaners and pest repellents.

Network with specialized agencies, non-profit organizations and engaged communities. More at: http://www.cseindia.org/html/eyou/climate/index_climate.htm

Off! Turn off televisions, videos, stereos and computers when they are not in use—they can consume between 10 and 60% of the power when in “stand-by” mode. Turn off computer screens and photocopiers when you take a break. Also turn off lights when you don’t need them, it saves energy after a minute or two. Unplug electronic items when you’re not using them.

Plant trees: The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has launched a major worldwide tree planting campaign. Individuals, communities, corporate business and industry, civil society organizations and governments are encouraged to enter tree-planting pledges online, aiming at planting one billion trees worldwide. www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/

Quit plastic bags. Carry your own bag with you when going shopping.

Recycle, repair and reuse materials. Tips, tricks and ideas for sustainable living. See: www.ban.org/main/marketplace.html; www.geda.org.in/e_conserv/ec_ov_tds.htm; <http://www.regeneration.org/tips-downloads/>

Save paper: Print on both sides of the paper. Proofread documents on screen before printing. Instead of making

a copy for each person, route one copy around the office. Do not discard one-sided printed pages; use them to make scratch pads.

Travel smart: Reduce air travel. Traveling by plane contributes to significant carbon dioxide emissions leading to climate change. If you have to fly, consider buying carbon offsets to compensate for the emissions caused by your flight. More at: www.carboncounter.org/

Use less energy, and conserve more of it! Do not waste water—close your tap while brushing your teeth, and while soaping clothes, body or dishes. Repair leaky plumbing fixtures; prevent overflowing of tanks. Energy is used for pumping and treating water. Save water to save energy!

Value wastes! Do not dump your home wastes everywhere. Heaps of garbage left in the open emit methane and contribute to global warming. Segregate your wastes so they can be recycled and/or reused and where possible use organic waste for composting.

Write letters about the health impacts of climate change to the local newspapers. This is a great way to keep the issue in the public mind. It also sparks a debate and allows us all to understand what the real issues are.

Express your concerns on environmental health issues and solutions and stay informed. Read widely and understand what we are dealing with.

Your president, prime minister, parliamentarian or local leader needs to know about the impacts of climate change on health. Write letters to them asking for policies to ensure greenhouse gas emissions fall by at least 3% each year from now on.

Zoom in reducing emissions: It is the best way forward! Our countries need new national legislation and laws to help ensure that we develop cleaner cars and cleaner power plants and to help us get government rebates on installing solar power, solar hot water, or wind power in our homes.