



Taking action on climate change

A guide for health professionals at work and home

There are many ways health professionals can prepare ourselves and others to protect our health against climate impacts that are already occurring. We have opportunities in both our health care settings and at home to make a positive impact. As always, we can do more good when we work together.

At work

Individually	Together
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use less energy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turn off lights when they're not needed. ▪ Power down electronics (especially during night shifts and in patient rooms). ■ Use fewer materials. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be mindful of water use. ▪ Go paperless. ▪ Choose reusable supplies both for personal use and patient care when possible. ▪ Only bring needed supplies into the patient room. ▪ Bring a water bottle and travel mug to work. ■ Sort waste properly. ■ Take public transit, carpool, bike, or walk. ■ Choose sustainable foods. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fewer (or no) animal products ▪ Local ▪ In-season ■ Talk with colleagues and patients about the health impacts of climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Join (or start!) a green team. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Influence hospital leadership to decrease greenhouse gas emissions – and save money – by implementing energy efficiency measures, renewable energy, and waste reduction plans. ■ Optimize operating room energy and waste. Work with leadership to consider powering down equipment when not in use, reprocessed devices, and reusable sterilization cases. Check out the Greening the OR Checklist. ■ Choose sustainable foods. Read and share the Health Care Without Harm Less Meat, Better Meat guide. ■ Help facilities prepare for the impacts of climate change by developing emergency response plans for patient needs and infrastructure damage during extreme weather events. ■ Use resources from the Nurses Climate Challenge and the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments' climate and health toolkit to educate colleagues and patients about the health impacts of climate change. ■ Choose online meetings or conference calls instead of in-person meetings that require travel. ■ Encourage hospitals to incentivize commuter travel/ public transit.

At home

Individually	Together
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Use less energy<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Make the switch to alternative energy.▪ Install programmable thermostats to adjust temperatures when you are asleep or away from home, saving energy and money.▪ Turn off lights and unplug electronics when they're not needed.▪ Choose ENERGY STAR appliances.■ Use fewer materials<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Be mindful of water use for personal use and landscaping.▪ Choose reusable and second-hand products and those with less packaging.▪ Reduce food waste by buying only what you'll use.■ Protect your home and yard against fires and floods and purchase insurance.■ Consider indoor air filtration during pollen season or if your region has wildfires.■ Sort waste properly, including composting.■ Reduce unnecessary air travel, choose efficient airlines, and pack lighter.■ Take public transit, carpool, bike, or walk.■ Choose sustainable foods.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Fewer (or no) animal products▪ Local▪ In-season▪ Plant a garden■ Talk with elected officials about how climate change impacts health and the need to take action to protect our communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Join or start community or neighborhood groups that address climate change.■ Plant trees.■ Work with your city or county to make your community bike friendly.■ Start a community garden■ Organize an Earth Day festival to educate your neighbors about climate change.■ Develop a crisis plan with those you live with and neighbors in the event of climate-related weather events.■ Purchase a share in a community solar garden.■ Share or rent yard and cleaning equipment and tools like lawn mowers, leaf blowers, power washers, power saws, and carpet cleaners.■ Advocate for city or county greenhouse gas reduction and/or energy efficiency goals.■ Work with neighbors to start a food waste and composting program in your local school, workplace, or community.

Resources

These resources were used to enhance the Nurses Climate Challenge talking tips and can be referenced for further information.

- 1 [Health Care Climate Council](#)
- 2 [Drawdown](#)
- 3 [Climate Care](#)

