# How Climate Affects Community Health

**A Social Media Toolkit for Engaging Local Communities in Climate and Health Adaptation**

## Communities across the country are working together to prepare for and respond to the health effects associated with a changing climate.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), through the Climate-Ready States and Cities Initiative (CRSCI), is helping health departments identify likely climate impacts in their communities, potential health effects associated with these impacts, and the populations most likely to be at risk.

CRSCI helps grantees from 16 states and two cities use the Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) framework to develop and implement adaptation plans to protect their communities.
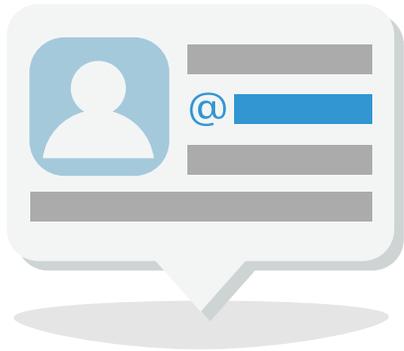
This social media toolkit was developed to support CRSCI grantees in their communication efforts. The toolkit includes suggested post copy, shareable graphics, videos and best practices. Tips on using this content to engage audiences and boost the reach of messages are included throughout the toolkit.

# BRACE Building Resilience Against Climate Effects

1. Anticipate Climate Impacts and Assess Vulnerabilities
2. Project the Disease Burden
3. Assess Public Health Interventions
4. Develop and Implement a Climate and Health Adaptation Plan
5. Evaluate Impact and Improve Quality of Activities

# Building a Coordinated Community Response

CRSCI grantees are working with community partners to develop a coordinated response to climate-related health effects. This cross-cutting work takes many forms, such as working with physicians to develop education initiatives, tapping community organizations and schools to access and support at-risk populations, working with local hospitals to monitor and track health trends, and engaging media outlets to report on health risks and spread knowledge of available resources.

**Consider engaging with:**

- Hospitals
- Healthcare providers
- Schools and school districts
- Community organizations and faith-based groups
- Media and meteorologists
- Local municipal entities, including:
  » Planning and zoning commissions
  » Housing and community development agencies
  » Transportation services
  » First responders
  » Energy and utility companies
  » Office of Sustainability
  » Wildlife and forestry management

**In addition to boosting engagement and reach on your social media posts, tagging local groups can support the development of a coordinated community response.**

# Tips for Engaging with Partners on Social Media

- **Use #ClimateChangesHealth** in all of your social posts to help create a unified voice around this topic.

- **Include other related hashtags** when appropriate to expand the reach of your posts (such as #ClimateAction, #climate, #PublicHealth, #Inclusion4Health, #BeatTheHeat, #HeatSafety, #wildfires).

- **On Twitter,** mention other accounts by using their handle starting with the @ symbol. Make sure the @ mention is in the body of the tweet; if you place it at the beginning, the tweet becomes a direct reply to that account and will not show up on your Twitter feed.
  NOTE: TWEETS ARE LIMITED TO 280 CHARACTERS.

- **On Facebook,** tag an organization in your post by using the '@' sign and selecting it from the dropdown list of accounts (start to type the account name after the "@" sign to help make the option appear).
  NOTE: MOBILE TAGGING ONLY WORKS IN FACEBOOK'S MOBILE APP, NOT THE MOBILE SITE.

- **Include visual elements** such as photos and graphics, to increase post engagement.
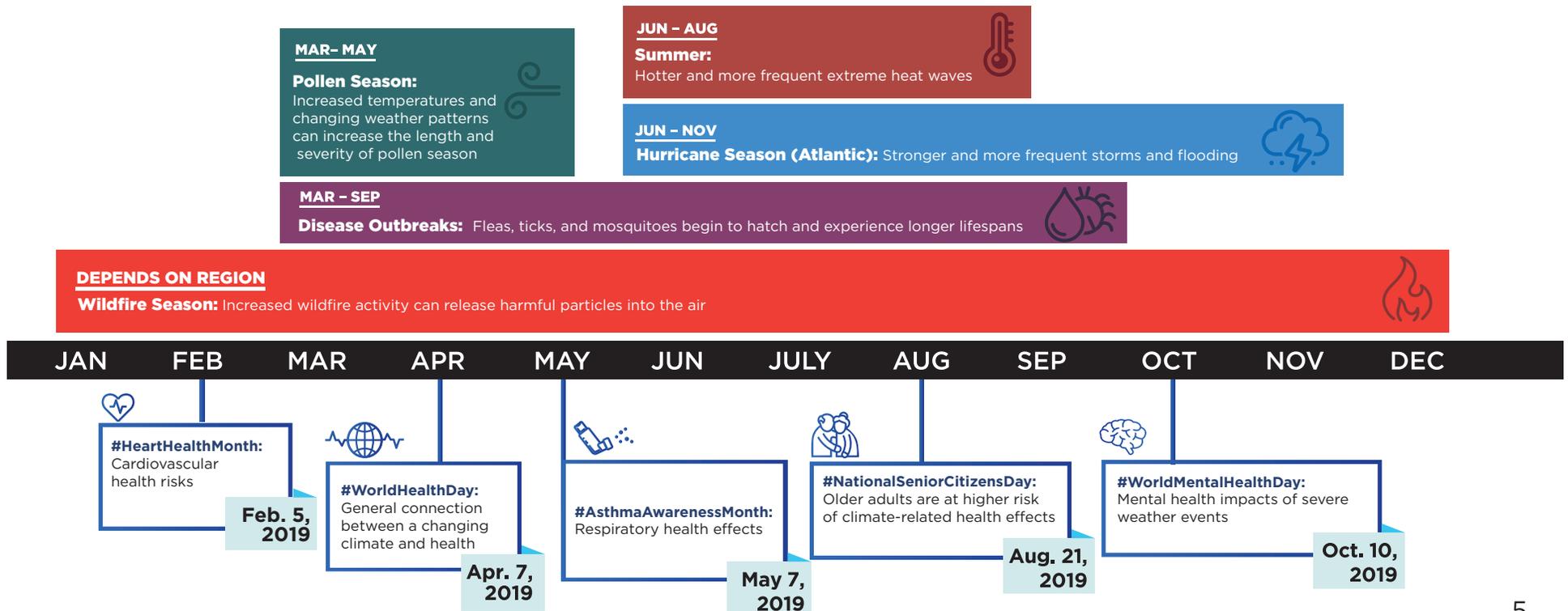
**Tip:** Reminders of these helpful tips appear in boxes like this one throughout the toolkit.

# Shared Messaging Opportunities

The following timeline indicates CRSCI shared messaging opportunities based on specific public health days and seasonal trends. These suggested dates and phases are intended to provide guidance in coordinating communication efforts across states and cities for the purposes of creating a unified voice.

Using the suggested content, grantees from across the country can plan to post on key public health dates to highlight climate-related health effects.

In addition to **specific grantee posting dates**, grantees affected by the following seasonal effects can refer to this timeline for suggested messaging phases. Content for these phases can be found on the following pages and are intended to be used based on specific grantee needs.

**JUN – AUG**
**Summer:** Hotter and more frequent extreme heat waves

**MAR– MAY**
**Pollen Season:** Increased temperatures and changing weather patterns can increase the length and severity of pollen season

**JUN – NOV**
**Hurricane Season (Atlantic):** Stronger and more frequent storms and flooding

**MAR – SEP**
**Disease Outbreaks:** Fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes begin to hatch and experience longer lifespans

**DEPENDS ON REGION**
**Wildfire Season:** Increased wildfire activity can release harmful particles into the air

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JULY | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

**#HeartHealthMonth:** Cardiovascular health risks
Feb. 5, 2019

**#WorldHealthDay:** General connection between a changing climate and health
Apr. 7, 2019

**#AsthmaAwarenessMonth:** Respiratory health effects
May 7, 2019

**#NationalSeniorCitizensDay:** Older adults are at higher risk of climate-related health effects
Aug. 21, 2019

**#WorldMentalHealthDay:** Mental health impacts of severe weather events
Oct. 10, 2019

## Feb. 5, 2019: Heart Health Month

**f** Changes to the climate such as more frequent and more severe extreme heat, extreme cold, and air pollution can aggravate heart conditions. Talk to your doctor about what you can do to protect yourself and your family. **#ClimateChangesHealth #HeartHealthMonth**

**t** Changes to the climate such as more frequent and more severe extreme heat, extreme cold, and air pollution can aggravate heart conditions. Talk to your doctor about what you can do to protect yourself and your family. **#ClimateChangesHealth #HeartHealthMonth**

## April 7, 2019: World Health Day

**f** A lot can change with the changing climate — including your health. Higher temperatures, increased rainfall, and more frequent extreme weather all pose significant health impacts for our community. **#ClimateChangesHealth #WorldHealthDay**

**t** A lot can change with the changing climate — including your health. Higher temperatures, increased rainfall, and more frequent extreme weather all pose significant health impacts for our community. **#ClimateChangesHealth #WorldHealthDay**

## May 7, 2019: Asthma Awareness Day

**f** Rising temperatures and changes in rainfall in **[State/City Name]** can increase airborne allergens that can aggravate asthma. Talk to your doctor about how these changes could affect you and your family. **#ClimateChangesHealth #AsthmaAwarenessDay**

**t** Rising temperatures and changes in rainfall in **[State/City Name]** can increase airborne allergens that can aggravate **#asthma**. Talk to your doctor about how these changes could affect you and your family. **#ClimateChangesHealth #AsthmaAwarenessDay**

## August 21, 2019: Senior Citizen Day

**f** A changing climate puts **[State/City Name]** at greater risk for heat waves, flooding, and extreme weather. While these changes put everyone at risk, older adults are often the most affected. Check on your older neighbors throughout severe weather events. **#ClimateChangesHealth #NationalSeniorCitizensDay**

**t** A changing climate puts **[State/City Name]** at greater risk for heat waves, flood events, and other extreme weather. Check on your older relatives & neighbors who are often the most affected. **#ClimateChangesHealth #NationalSeniorCitizensDay**

## October 10, 2019: World Mental Health Day

**f** Our changing climate can bring more frequent and more extreme weather events. High levels of anxiety and post-traumatic stress are increasing among survivors and first responders who live through these events — even among people with no history of mental illness. Find out what resources are available to you and your community. **#ClimateChangesHealth #WorldMentalHealthDay**

**t** As extreme weather becomes more frequent, **#anxiety** and **#PTSD** increases for survivors and **#FirstResponders** who live through these events. Find out what resources are available in your community. **#ClimateChangesHealth #WorldMentalHealthDay**

CHANGES IN OUR CLIMATE CAN IMPACT EVERYONE'S HEALTH. BUT
**OLDER ADULTS CAN BE AT HIGHER RISK**

EXTREME WEATHER AND
**MENTAL HEALTH**

The posts on the following pages contain topic-specific social media posts about climate and health.

**These posts work best when they are combined with custom links to local resources and calls to action.**

If your community networks don't have relevant supporting information, the CDC has online resources for each topic. The links can be found at the bottom of each section of the toolkit content.

**Additional Information**

Look for these boxes to locate CDC resources about each topic.

# Extreme Heat

## Urban Heat Islands

**f** Can't stand the heat? As our climate changes, people in urban areas known as 'urban heat islands' are at a higher risk for heat exhaustion and heat stroke. **[State/City Name]** is taking steps to ensure everyone has a place to beat the heat — find a cooling center near you. **#ClimateChangesHealth**

**t** Can't stand the heat? As our climate changes, people in areas known as **#urbanheatislands** are at a higher risk for heat-related illness. **[State/City Name]** is taking steps to ensure everyone has a place to beat the heat. **#ClimateChangesHealth #ExtremeHeat**

> **Tip: Make this content more relevant for your community.** Customize the call-to-action to highlight your community's resources for extreme heat events. Link to localized information.

## At-Risk Groups

**f** Extreme Heat events from our changing climate are affecting more people in our community. This summer, **[State/City Name]** is taking steps to protect those who are most at risk**. #ClimateChangesHealth**
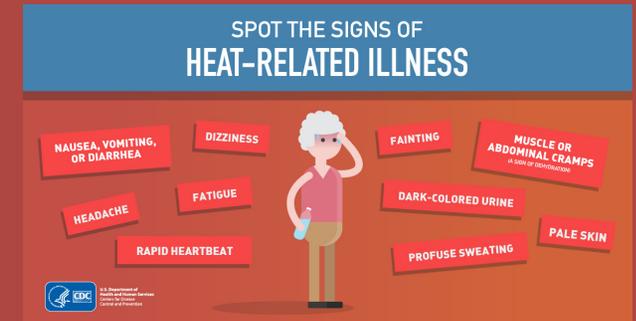
**t** **#ExtremeHeat** events from our changing climate are affecting more people in our community. This summer, **[State/City Name]** is taking steps to protect those who are most at risk. **#ClimateChangesHealth**





EVERYONE CAN BE IMPACTED BY EXTREME HEAT EVENTS BUT **SOME PEOPLE ARE AT GREATER RISK**

PREGNANT WOMEN | YOUNG CHILDREN | CITY DWELLERS | PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC DISEASE

OLDER ADULTS | OUTDOOR WORKERS | STUDENT ATHLETES

## Heat-Related Illness

**f** Extreme heat can aggravate an existing chronic illness and lead to serious medical conditions that require emergency treatment. Stay safe this summer. Learn to spot signs of heat-related illness. **#ClimateChangesHealth**

**t** Safeguard against **#heatstroke** and heat exhaustion this summer. Learn to spot signs of heat-related illness. **#ClimateChangesHealth**

**Tip:** Include a link with localized information about what residents can do if they have symptoms of heat-related illness.



SPOT THE SIGNS OF
## HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS

NAUSEA, VOMITING, OR DIARRHEA

DIZZINESS

FAINTING

MUSCLE OR ABDOMINAL CRAMPS (A SIGN OF DEHYDRATION)

HEADACHE

FATIGUE

DARK-COLORED URINE

RAPID HEARTBEAT

PROFUSE SWEATING

PALE SKIN

CDC U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Additional Information** about extreme heat can be found at: www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/ effects/temperature_extremes.htm
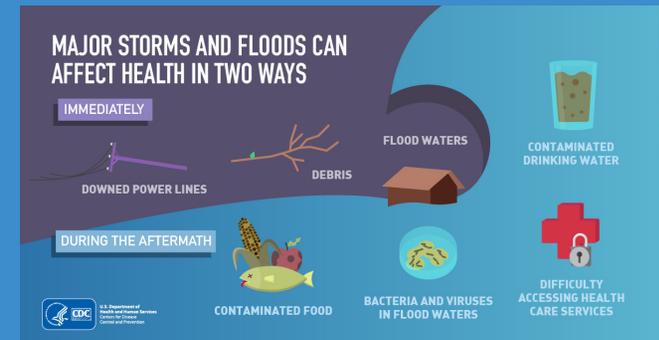
# Storms and Flooding

## Flood Safety

**f** Extreme rainfall and hurricanes are increasing the severity and frequency of floods in our community. Flooded roads, sanitary sewer overflows, and structural damage can result in severe health impacts like injury and drowning. Protect yourself by learning how to stay safe, such as avoiding driving in flooded areas. **#ClimateChangesHealth**

**🐦** **#ExtremeWeather** is increasing the severity and frequency of **#floods** in our community. Protect yourself against injury and drowning during these events by learning how to stay safe, such as avoiding driving in flooded areas. **#ClimateChangesHealth**

## Displacement and Mental Health

**f** As our climate changes, extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and more severe. The stress of preparing for and recovering from storms, as well as forced evacuations, can lead to high levels of anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder — even among people with no history of mental illness. Know what services are available in your community. **#ClimateChangesHealth**

**🐦** As our climate changes, **#naturaldisasters** are becoming more frequent and severe. Preparing for storms and forced evacuations can lead to **#anxiety** and **#PTSD** — even among people without a history of #**mentalillness.** **#ClimateChangesHealth**

**Tip:** Include customized information about the mental health resources available in your community.



MAJOR STORMS AND FLOODS CAN AFFECT HEALTH IN TWO WAYS

IMMEDIATELY

DOWNED POWER LINES

DEBRIS

FLOOD WATERS

CONTAMINATED DRINKING WATER

DURING THE AFTERMATH

CONTAMINATED FOOD

BACTERIA AND VIRUSES IN FLOOD WATERS

DIFFICULTY ACCESSING HEALTH CARE SERVICES



EXTREME WEATHER AND MENTAL HEALTH

**Additional Information** about storms and flooding can be found at: www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/precipitation_extremes.htm.

# Air Quality
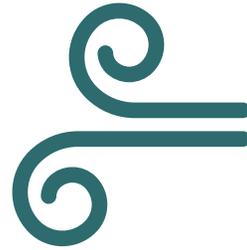
## Allergens

**f** A longer and more intense pollen season could be in the forecast this year as **[State/City Name]**'s climate changes. Talk to your doctor about how you can protect your family against increased allergies and asthma attacks. **#ClimateChangesHealth**

**🐦** A longer and more intense **#pollenseason** could be in the forecast this year as **[State/City Name]'**s climate changes. Talk to your doctor about how you can protect your family against increased **#allergies** and asthma attacks. **#ClimateChangesHealth**

## Wildfires

**f** Fine particulates in wildfire smoke can penetrate deep into the lungs, increasing the risk of significant health problems — especially among children, older adults, and people with existing respiratory and cardiovascular problems. Listen and watch for news or health warnings about smoke in your area. **#ClimateChangesHealth**

**🐦** Fine particulates in **#wildfire** smoke can penetrate deep into the lungs, increasing the risk of significant health problems. Watch for news or health warning about smoke in your area. **#ClimateChangesHealth**
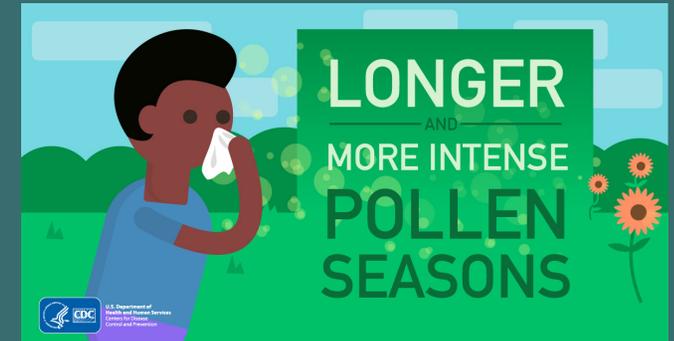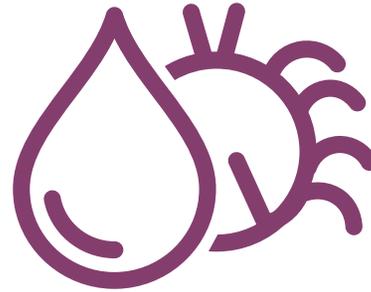




**Additional Information** about wildfires can be found at: www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/wildfires.htm

Additional information about allergens can be found at: www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/allergen.htm

# Disease Outbreaks

## Vectorborne Disease

**f** The warmer weather in **[State/City Name]** can mean diseases transmitted by mosquitoes, fleas and ticks can multiply faster, spread farther, and infect more people. Protect yourself by using insect repellent, wearing long sleeves and pants, and checking for ticks after spending time outdoors. **#ClimateChangesHealth**

**🐦** Warmer weather in **[State/City Name]** can mean diseases transmitted by mosquitoes, fleas & ticks multiply faster, spread farther & transmit disease to more people. Use insect repellent & check for ticks after spending time outdoors. **#ClimateChangesHealth**

## Waterborne Illness

**f** Higher temperatures and changes in rainfall can create ideal conditions for disease-causing bacteria to thrive in standing water. Never let your children play in or drink standing rainwater and check local alerts before taking that lap in the lake. **#ClimateChangesHealth**

**🐦** Higher temperatures and changes in rainfall create ideal conditions for diarrheal disease-causing bacteria to thrive. Don't play in standing rainwater and check local alerts before taking that lap in the lake. **#ClimateChangesHealth**

**DISEASE CASES**
FROM INFECTED TICKS, MOSQUITOES, AND FLEAS HAVE
**TRIPLED**
IN THE LAST 13 YEARS
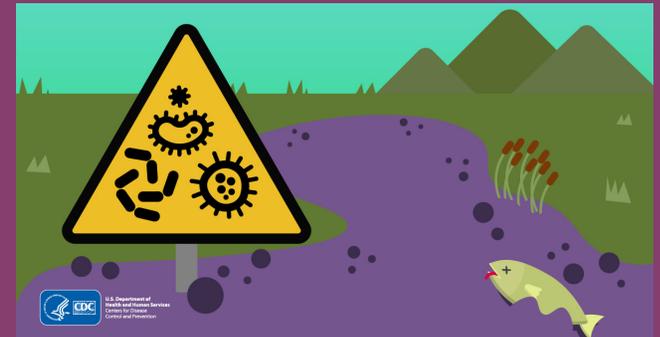
### Additional information

about waterborne illness can be found at: www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/food_waterborne.htm

Additional information about vectorborne disease can be found at: www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/vectors.htm

Additional information about insect repellant can be found at: www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you

**Find more resources for communicating about climate and health adaptation at CDC.gov/climateandhealth**