



HEALTH



A clean environment is essential for human health and well-being. Air and water pollution as well as poor management of hazardous chemicals and waste contribute to undermine health.

Natural disasters and environmental shocks can have substantial impact on health, including deaths, injuries, diseases, disabilities, psychosocial problems. SDG3 <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/sustainable-development-goals/why-do-sustainable-development-goals-matter/goal-3>

Higher temperatures pose major health risks to older people and raise the likelihood that those who work outside – such as farmers and builders – will suffer from heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Many killer diseases, including malaria and cholera, increase as temperature and rainfall increase. The mosquitos that carry the malaria virus, for example, thrive in hot and humid conditions – weather which climate change is likely to make more common. Big Picture <https://bigpictureeducation.com/how-does-climate-change-affect-human-health>

Air pollution kills more than 6 million people every year, is the biggest environmental health risk of our time. Airborne pollutants are responsible for about one third of deaths from stroke, chronic respiratory disease, and lung cancer, as well as one quarter of deaths from heart attack.

Air pollution comes from many sources – from cookstoves and kerosene lamps to coal-fired power plants, vehicle emissions, industrial furnaces, wildfires, and sand and dust storms. The problem is most acute in urban areas, particularly in Africa and Asia. In low- and middle-income countries, 98 per cent of cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants fail to meet the World Health Organization's air quality guidelines. UN Environment <https://www.unenvironment.org/why-does-air-matter>

Although the development and causes of all **cancers** are not completely understood, pathogens, environmental contaminants, age, and genetics are all factors in its development as are increased exposure to toxic chemicals, known or suspected to cause cancer, that are released into the environment following heavy rainfall or flooding and by increased volatilization of chemicals under conditions of increased temperature.

Depletion of stratospheric ozone leads to an increase in UV exposure and temperature, increasing the risk of skin cancer and cataracts. Alternatively, an increase in exposure to UV radiation can lead to elevated levels of Vitamin D, which has been associated with a decreased risk of some types of cancer. National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences https://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/programs/geh/climatechange/health_impacts/cancer/index.cfm

In the developing world, **malnutrition** is rising because crops are failing, and that's happening because of extreme weather. Cycles of drought and flood in West Africa are making it harder and harder for subsistence farmers to grow enough food to feed their families. And when the rain does come, it washes the topsoil away, degrading the land,



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so it becomes even more difficult to cultivate crops in the future. As a result, people go hungry and children in particular suffer from malnourishment.

The impact of climate change on **mental health** is a relatively new field of enquiry, but it should not be underestimated. People who have survived droughts, floods, tropical storms and similar extreme weather events often lose their homes and their families. As a result, they can experience post-traumatic stress disorder, severe depression and other mental health problems. In developing countries, where the impacts of climate change are at their most severe, there is less access to mental health services, so symptoms go untreated and unchecked. Big Picture

<https://bigpictureeducation.com/how-does-climate-change-affect-human-health>

Church Teaching

- **An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness. In the end, a world of exacerbated consumption is at the same time a world which mistreats life in all its forms.** Laudato Si Chapter 5 para 230

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

- **Rest opens our eyes to the larger picture and gives us renewed sensitivity to the rights of others. And so the day of rest, centred on the Eucharist, sheds its light on the whole week, and motivates us to greater concern for nature and the poor.** Laudato Si Chapter 6 para

237 http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

- **Man does not seek perfection in isolation. Because persons by their nature form communities, it is not possible to understand the individual pursuit of the good apart from the good of the community more broadly speaking—that is, the common good. The Catechism defines common good as “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily” (CCC, no.**

1906). <https://democraciaparticipativa.net/documentos-data-a-referenda/documents-in-english/christian-social-thought/14848-catholic-social-teaching-and-health-care.html>

Ideas for Action

- [Carbon Footprint Calculator](#)



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- [22 ways to conserve water at home](#)
- [41 Ways to stop air pollution](#)
 - [Composting at Home: A Complete Beginner's Guide](#)

Liturgical Resources

- [St Andrew's & Edinburgh Diocese](#) - Season of Creation liturgy resource
- [Australian Catholic](#) - Liturgical Resource
- [Sisters Of Mercy](#) - Laudato Si and Sisters of Mercy's Critical Concerns
- [Peacemeal](#) - Liturgy ideas for sharing a meal.
- [Global Catholic Climate Movement](#) - Liturgical, prayer and spiritual resources.