

Health Bulletin

Health tips and news for the community



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Climate Change in Philadelphia

As the climate changes, Philadelphia is becoming a wetter and hotter place. Philadelphians will feel the health effects of longer heat waves, more rain, sleet and snow, and higher sea level.

Heat Waves

- Heat waves will be longer and hotter and may happen more often.
- Heat waves will put more demand on the electrical grid.
- People without air conditioning are more vulnerable in heat emergencies.

Inside this issue:

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More Rain, Sleet and Snow



- Six more inches of precipitation will fall on Philadelphia each year by the end of the century.
- Most precipitation will fall as winter snow and big storms.
- Storms and flooding may make it harder for people to get to the hospital and medical appointments.
- Severe storms can cause power outages, which can affect the health of vulnerable populations.
- Flooding can increase the number of mosquitos and other pests that can cause disease.

Higher Sea Level



- Sea level is rising faster on the east coast of the United States than ***the worldwide average***.
- By the end of the century, the Delaware River and the Schuylkill River could rise more than 4 feet!
- Higher sea level + worse storms = more widespread flooding

How Do We Know This?

- The **Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change** are climate experts who gather climate reports from many scientists and create projections of future general weather trends.
- In November 2015, the **Office of Sustainability** released a climate adaptation report, called *Growing Stronger: Toward a Climate-Ready Philadelphia*. You can find the report online at tiny.cc/growingstronger

STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE HEALTH BULLETIN

You can find the Health Bulletin in many languages at: <http://www.phila.gov/Health/DiseaseControl/healthBulletin.html>.
For more information about the Health Bulletin, contact Marialisa Ramirez at 215-685-6719 or HealthBulletin@phila.gov.

Asthma and Springtime Triggers

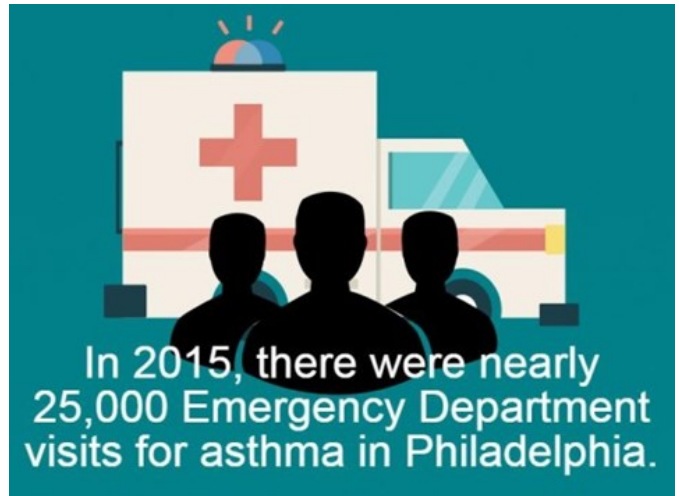


Asthma is a breathing problem. If you have asthma, the tubes that take air into your lungs can get tight and make it hard to breathe.

The signs of an asthma attack are coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath.

Did you know?

- Philadelphia is one of the worst cities in America for asthma and allergy sufferers because people are exposed to high levels of pollen and ozone smog, which are common asthma triggers.
- Asthma triggers cause your asthma to flare up.
- Asthma triggers might be inside or outside your house.
- Asthma triggers include: **pollen**, cigarette smoke, cold air, pets, dust mites, and cockroaches.



What is Pollen?



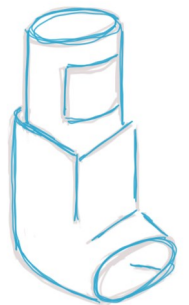
- Pollen is a fine powder produced by plants.
- Pollen is carried in the air and can get on your skin and in your eyes, nose, and lungs.
- Pollens from trees, grasses, and weeds are the main cause of allergies.
- Spring is not the only **allergy season**. Pollen counts can vary by location, day, and time of day.
- Visit www.pollen.com to find out when pollen levels are high in your area.

How can I avoid pollen this Spring?

- Limit your time outside when pollen counts are high. This includes:
 - ◊ Days that are very warm, dry or windy.
 - ◊ Mornings between 5 am and 10 am.
- The best time to be outside is after heavy rain.
- When you come in from outside, remember to:
 - ◊ Wash your face and hands.
 - ◊ Change and wash clothes.
- Wash your bed sheets in hot, soapy water once a week.
- Don't hang your clothes and bed sheets outside to dry.
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from pollen.
- Set your air conditioners in your home and car to re-circulate to avoid letting in air with pollen.
- Avoid contact with things that might have pollen on them, such as pets and people that have been outside for a long time.

Asthma Tips:

- Take your medicine exactly as your doctor tells you to.
- Always bring your inhaler with you.
- If you are playing sports or exercising outdoors, take it easy at first. If you are out of breath, take a break until you feel better.
- Don't use your inhaler more than you're told to by your doctor. It can make your asthma worse!



Stay Cool in the Heat

In Philadelphia, summer is a great time to get outdoors. But the heat, humid air and long days can be unsafe, especially for older adults and people with health problems. Too much heat can cause **heat sickness**. Know what signs to look for and how to prevent it.



Signs of heat sickness may include:

- Extreme sweating
- Nausea (upset stomach)
- Feeling very weak
- Feeling tired
- Thirsty
- Lightheaded or dizzy

If you have any of these signs, get to a cool spot and drink water. Using a fan and putting wet towels on your skin may also help. If you start feeling worse, get medical help.

During hot weather, stay safe from the heat by following these tips:

Drink lots of fluids

- Drink water throughout the day.
- Avoid caffeinated drinks like soda, tea or alcohol (they can dehydrate you).

Stay cool outside

- Avoid being outside during the hottest times of the day (10 a.m. - 2 p.m.).
- Try to rest in the shade and wear sunscreen, light clothing, hats and sunglasses to keep cool.

Stay cool inside

- Use a fan with the windows open or an air conditioner.
- Visit places like the library, shopping centers, movie theaters or senior centers that have air conditioning.

Watch out for others

- Check on your neighbors and people you know who have medical problems.
- Never leave seniors, children or pets alone in a car.

For help when it is hot or to find a place to cool off, call the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging Heatline at 215-765-9040.

If you are on medication for any reason, you may be at high risk for heat-related problems. Be sure to ask your doctor, and be careful to avoid situations where you might overheat.

Summer is Mosquito and Tick Season

Mosquito and tick bites can make you sick. These bugs can spread diseases like **West Nile Virus** and **Lyme Disease**.

Quick Tips:

- Stay inside at dawn and dusk, which is when mosquitoes are most active.
- Keep mosquitoes outside by having well-fitting screens on both windows and doors.
- Empty standing water, mow grass, and brush leaf litter from around your house.
- If you are out when mosquitoes are in areas with tall grass or woods:
 - ◊ Wear bug spray that has one of the following ingredients:
 - ⇒ **DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus** or **PMD**
 - ◊ Wear long sleeves and pants to cover your skin.
 - ◊ Check for ticks and shower after being outdoors.

Hurricane Safety

Hurricane season is from June 1st to November 30th. Hurricane dangers come in many forms, including storm surge, heavy rain, inland flooding, high winds, tornadoes, and rip currents. Our region had flooding after Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

Follow these tips to help you and your family stay safe during a flood and when cleaning up after the flood.

Stay Out of the Water!

- **Do Not Drive or Walk into Floodwater!** It can be deeper than you think and you could get stuck.
- **Floodwater Moves Quickly!** It can sweep even good swimmers downstream.
- **Floodwater is NOT Clean!** You can get cut or hurt by debris floating in the water. There also might be small amounts of chemicals or sewage that could make you sick.



Electricity Warning!

- If there is electrical equipment in the water, it could be electrified, and you could get shocked.
- Be sure to turn off the electricity in all flooded rooms in your home or business as soon as possible.



Stay Safe!

- **Keep the Health Information Card in your wallet or pocket.** The Health Information Card will help you keep track of important health information, medicines, emergency contact information, any special needs and any special supplies.
- **Wash Your Hands!** You can get sick if you eat, drink or smoke after touching the water or things that have been spoiled by the flood.
- **Protect Yourself!** Wear waterproof gloves, boots, and other protective clothing while cleaning. These clothes should be thrown away or washed after cleanup is completed each day.
- **Call your health care provider** if you get cut or hurt by something in the floodwater and ask about getting a tetanus shot.

- Call your health care provider** if you or a family member has any of these symptoms:
- **Fever over 100 degrees**
 - **Vomiting**
 - **Diarrhea**
 - **Severe stomach cramps**

Get your FREE PDPH Health Information Card!

Download a PDPH Health Information Card by visiting:

http://www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/PDPH_Web_HealthInfoCard.pdf

or contact Marialisa Ramirez at (215) 685-6719.

For more information about going back into your house safely after a flood, visit <http://emergency.CDC.gov/disasters/floods>