



CANCER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Summary produced by the Blackfeet Environmental Office
in cooperation with the Center for Large Landscape Conservation

For more information visit blackfeetclimatechange.com

We are observing increasing cancer incidence amongst Native American communities. Any loss of life within our community has a devastating impact. It is important to understand how climate change could increase cancer among *Amskapi Pikuni* community members. Our decisions and actions can influence the degree to which our community will or will not experience these impacts to our health. Being proactive and making decisions now to safeguard health will help us be more resilient.

How climate change could increase the incidence of cancer:

- High levels of indoor air pollution and fine particulates may increase the risk of lung cancer.
- Climate change is expected to deplete stratospheric ozone, which would increase ultraviolet radiation exposure, increasing the risk of skin cancers and cataracts.
- Increased precipitation or flooding has the potential to increase toxic chemical and heavy metal leaching from storage sites. Exposure to chemicals that persist in the environment may also increase if runoff enters the water supply.



WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

In addition to exposure to harmful chemicals and ultra-violet radiation, many other factors influence cancer risk, including age, family history, viruses and bacteria, behaviors like tobacco use, high levels of alcohol consumption, obesity, an unhealthy diet, and sun exposure.

HOW CAN WE ADAPT?

- Make community development decisions that promote active, healthy lifestyles.
- Increase access to healthcare for all Blackfeet.
- Properly identify and manage waste disposal and chemical storage sites and prepare them for high precipitation events and flooding.
- Reduce the amount of chemicals in the environment so that fewer chemicals enter run-off. For example, encourage agricultural practices that reduce pesticide and herbicide applications and practices that buffer farm areas from streams and lakes to help reduce the amount of chemicals entering the water supply.
- Plant trees, encourage people to stay indoors during extremely poor air quality days, and use other techniques to adapt to diminishing air quality.
- Encourage sunscreen use.

For more information, visit the Blackfeet Country and Climate Change website:

blackfeetclimatechange.com

Content on this page is summarized from the U.S. Global Change Research Program's report, "The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States", the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences' "A Human Health Perspective on Climate Change", and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "When Every Drop Counts" to briefly describe some of the possible health outcomes that are most relevant to Blackfeet Country. This page does not include all possible health impacts and outcomes, nor does it include all possible risks and responses (December, 2017).