HEALTH IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE: SEVERE WEATHER

Extreme temperatures and heat waves are expected to rise each year. Over the last 40 years, temperatures have steadily increased in cities, suburbs, and even rural areas. Last century, we used to see an average of roughly 30 days with temperatures reaching 90 or higher. Later this century, we can expect half of the year to exceed 90 degrees. Warmer temperatures and shifting weather patterns can worsen air quality, leading to asthma attacks and other respiratory and cardiovascular health effects.

"Increases in the frequency or severity of some extreme weather events, such as extreme precipitation, flooding, droughts, and storms, threaten the health of people during and after the event. - U.S. EPA

Extreme rainfall, and the extreme lack of it, are getting worse and worse each year. We continue to see both record-breaking wet and dry months. When huge downpours immediately follow a drought, the dried-out earth cannot absorb the excess water, resulting in flooding. Severe flooding from intensifying hurricanes also imperils our coastal towns, cities, and ecosystems. Extreme weather events threaten access to safe drinking water, damage roads, bridges, and houses, and causes serious stress and mental health problems.

Wildfires in North Carolina are expected to increase due to extreme heat and severe drought. Wildfires can cause a spike in air pollution from smoke and other unhealthy air particles, and erase decades of clean air policy gains.

The number of months with record-high rainfall increased in the central and Eastern United States by more than

25%

between 1980 and 2013.

North Carolina expects to see the days of high risk for wildfire increase by

400%

in the coming years.

North Carolina expects to see an increase in drought severity of about

50%

by 2050.