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WHAT OREGONIANS CAN DO

GLOBAL WARMING AND YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH

You don't have to be a physician to join Oregon PSR. Anyone who is concerned about global warming and its effects can work with PSR to reduce global warming. Visit Oregon PSR's web site, www.oregonpsr.org, to find out more about global warming and what you can do. You can also find information on Oregon and Federal energy and global warming policies, and links to other groups working on global warming. At the web site you can sign up for weekly email updates about current actions and events and learn more about our presentation, "The Need for Energy Independence: Reducing Global Warming and Securing a Healthy Future." We present this talk to Rotary Clubs, high schools, church groups and other community groups. If you'd like to invite us to meet with your group, please call 503-274-2720.

GLOBAL WARMING IS HERE

Changes due to global warming are occurring in Oregon and around the world. Physicians can already see the grave threat global warming poses to public health and to the environment. As Oregonians, it is important to take actions to protect our families and fellow citizens.

One of the largest causes of global warming is burning fossil fuels—natural gas, oil and coal. When these fuels are burned, carbon dioxide and other pollutants are released, trapping heat and raising the temperature on the earth's surface. To slow and, hopefully, reverse this trend and protect our health and the health of the planet, we must make individual changes and demand political action. Much is at stake.

HEALTH RISKS OF GLOBAL WARMING

More air pollution

Decreased air quality increases heart disease, lung diseases and infections, allergies, asthma attacks, low birth weight, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS or Crib Death) and premature mortality.¹

Water-borne disease

Droughts, floods and sea levels affect the quality and supply of water. Exposure to bacteria, viruses and parasites in contaminated water can cause a wide range of diseases including ear, nose and eye infections; hepatitis; skin rashes; and lung diseases and infections.^{1 & 2} Drought in the Klamath Basin in 2001 contaminated the water supply in the town of Bonanza, where citizens depend on wells for drinking water. Because groundwater levels were low, the water became polluted by runoff containing pesticides, fertilizer, and manure from fields.

More heat waves

Heat stress can lead to heat injury, heat stroke and increased deaths, especially in vulnerable populations—the very young, the elderly and the poor.² It is now expected that the number of serious heat waves will double.

Insect-borne disease

Diseases spread by mosquitoes and ticks, such as West Nile Virus, malaria and dengue fever, have traditionally been found in hotter, more tropical climates. As global warming increases local temperatures, disease-carrying insects are able to live in more places and breed for longer seasons.^{1 & 2}

Extreme weather-related injuries

Projected increases in temperatures can cause more severe floods, storms, droughts, mudslides and hurricanes, resulting in increased injuries, illnesses and deaths.¹ Severe storms damage water-purifying systems and hospitals and also leave behind toxic floodwaters.

Visit the Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility web site for more information on global warming at www.OregonPSR.org.

1. **Assessing the Evidence for Clinical and Public Health Impacts of Changes in Global Climate**, Physicians for Social Responsibility, 2004

2. **Degrees of Danger, Health Effects of Climate Change and Energy in Oregon**, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Feb. 2002

16 WAYS TO REDUCE GLOBAL WARMING

Can one person make a difference?

Absolutely. The U.S. has 4% of the world's population yet releases more than 25% of the world's carbon dioxide (CO₂). By decreasing your own energy use and supporting political changes to reduce CO₂ and other global warming pollution, you can make a difference.

Demand change

1. Support federal, state and local initiatives to reduce global warming pollution. Check www.oregonpsr.org for an updated listing of current legislation and how to contact your representatives.

Reduce transport emissions

2. Walk, bike and take public transportation as much as possible. FACT: Cars and trucks are responsible for about one-third of Oregon's and the U.S.'s global warming pollution.

3. Carpool and combine trips. FACT: Several short trips taken from a cold start can use twice as much fuel as a longer multipurpose trip covering the same distance.

4. Drive a hybrid or a fuel-efficient car. FACT: Every gallon of gas you don't use can reduce CO₂ emissions by 20 lbs.

5. Drive the speed limit. FACT: Each 5 mph you drive over 60 mph is like paying an additional \$0.21 per gallon for gas. See www.fueleconomy.gov for more tips on how to improve fuel economy.

6. Buy locally grown food. FACT: Transporting 1 lb of asparagus from Chile to New York uses 73 lbs of fuel energy, releasing 4.7 lbs of CO₂ into the atmosphere.

Conserve energy

7. Switch your lightbulbs to fluorescent and turn off lights and appliances when not in use. FACT: Replacing one frequently used bulb with a compact fluorescent bulb saves 500 lbs of CO₂ per year.

8. Buy energy-efficient appliances. FACT: Replacing a 20-year-old refrigerator will reduce your home's CO₂ contribution by about one ton per year.

9. Wrap your water heater, purchase an on-demand or tankless water heater or install a solar thermal system, which releases no CO₂. FACT: Wrapping your water heater can reduce CO₂ emissions by 1,000 lbs per year.

10. Set your thermostat lower and use a programmable thermostat. FACT: Each two degree adjustment can result in reduced CO₂ emissions of about 500 lbs per year.

11. Weatherproof your home. The Community Energy Project (www.communityenergyproject.org) in Portland has free weatherproofing materials and training. Outside Portland contact your local Community Action Agency (<http://cado-oregon.org>).

Use renewable energy

12. Subscribe your home and workplace to "green power." PGE (www.portlandgeneral.com), 503-228-6322 or 800-542-8818. Pacific Power (www.pacificpower.net), 800-769-3717.

13. Generate your own electricity. Visit the Energy Trust of Oregon (www.energytrust.org). Even in Oregon, a solar electric system can trim 15% or more off your electric bill. Incentives and tax credits can cover over 50% of the total cost of the system.

14. Use biodiesel to heat your home. See www.biofuels4oregon.org for a list of suppliers.

Get involved

15. Join Oregon PSR. Your membership makes our voice louder when we talk to our lawmakers.

16. Counteract your CO₂ emissions by visiting www.carboncounter.org or www.nativeenergy.com and purchasing carbon offsets that will go toward reducing global warming.

PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (PSR), the active conscience of American medicine, uses its members' expertise and influence to address this century's greatest threats to human welfare and survival. PSR is committed to the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and the achievement of a healthy and sustainable environment. In 1985, PSR shared the Nobel Peace Prize with International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

While we recognize that uncertainties exist in the measurement of global warming—just as most scientific measurement is uncertain—we are moved to action. The overwhelming consensus among climate scientists is that the earth's temperature is increasing and that humans are largely responsible. Human-caused global warming is already changing the environment in ways that are harmful to human health.