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THE NORTH COUNTRY HEALTH EFFECT

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A health & safety guide brought to you by the Clinton County Health Department.



Climate change

Climate change is a natural occurrence on Earth. However, since the Industrial Revolution in the 1800s, human activities have become the main cause of current climate change. Greenhouse gases trap the sun's energy and heat rather than letting it reflect back into space. Greenhouse gases are necessary for life on Earth. Without these gases, Earth would be too cold for life. However, we are experiencing levels of these gases that are becoming too high to handle. The increasing level of greenhouse gases is trapping too much of the sun's heat and energy, which is raising Earth's temperature outside of its natural range. Carbon dioxide (CO2) is the primary greenhouse gas from human activities and is responsible for the greatest amount of global warming.

Allergens and air quality

Allergies are the sixth leading cause of chronic illness in the U.S., costing Americans over \$18 billion per year. Hay fever, asthma, and eczema are the three major allergic diseases caused by pollens, molds, and other indoor allergens.

Stay Safe from Allergens & Poor Air Quality:

- Check pollen levels and the Air Quality Index as part of your morning routine. Climate change affects the intensity of pollen seasons and increases air pollutants. Visit [Weather.com](https://www.weather.com) to view these levels under "More Forecasts".
- If you go outside when pollen levels are high, shower when you get back inside. It is safest to go out when pollen levels are lowest, such as on rainy, cloudy, and windless days.
- Keep the air in your home free from pollutants by using an air purifier.

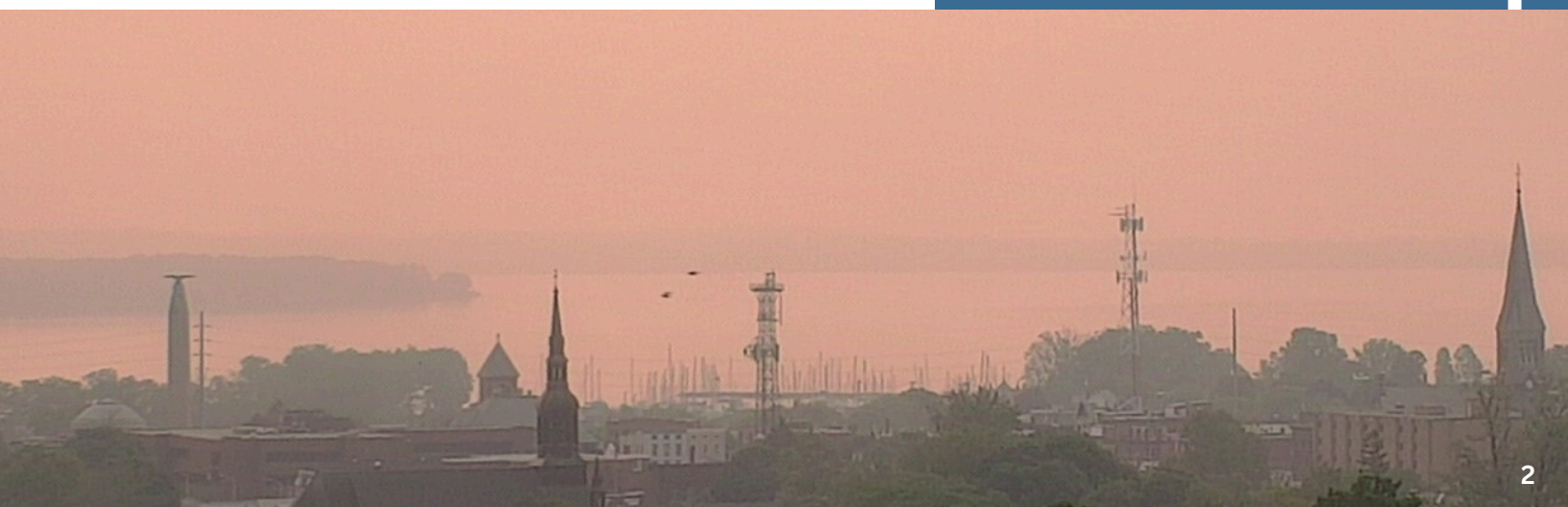
Reduce how much you pollute

Individual efforts to fight climate change can have a large impact when an entire community joins together. Simple changes to your daily lifestyle can reduce your carbon footprint significantly. The suggestions below can help you reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- Carpool with nearby coworkers (and rotate drivers).
- Buy groceries locally.
- Plant fruits and vegetables at your home or community garden.
- Donate excess food to support your community and compost food scraps to reduce the amount of food waste sent to the landfills. **Scan the QR code for a [list of food pantries in Clinton County.](#)**



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Extreme Heat

The 10 warmest years in the history of the world have happened over the past 10 years. 2024 was the warmest year ever. Heat waves are increasing in frequency and duration and have devastating impacts on our health, overall well-being, and food production.

Stay Safe from Extreme Heat:

- Check on neighbors without air conditioning and those with limited mobility or social connections.
- Take frequent breaks and stay hydrated when working outside.
- Medications lose effectiveness when stored at the wrong temperature. Follow safe storage recommendations from your pharmacist.
- Use cooling centers to prevent heat-related illness.

Scan the QR code for local cooling center locations and other heat safety tips.



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The Food System

Climate change is also negatively impacting our food system. Changes, like in the amount of heat or rainfall our area receives, affects the availability, quantity, and quality of food available. In fact, climate change has increased the number of malnourished children worldwide by 7-20%. Global food production is estimated to decline by 2% every 10 years while global food demand increases by 14% every 10 years. By reducing our carbon footprint, we can help minimize the impact climate change has on our food system.

Impacts of Climate Change on The Food System:

- Extreme heat, drought, and other extreme weather events cause decreased crop yields and heat stress in livestock.
- Rising temperatures cause faster growth of bacteria in food, increasing the risk of contamination.
- Extreme weather events can disrupt the supply chain for the distribution of food products and increases the risk of food waste.



Storms and flooding

When temperatures rise, so does the number of severe storms and potential for extreme rainfall. Extreme rainfall occurs when a large amount of rain falls in a short time. The number of extreme rainfall events is expected to double or triple in the United States by 2100, with the greatest increases expected in the Northeast.

Stay Safe from Storms & Flooding:

- Download the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) app to stay up-to-date on storm and flood warnings.
- Store important documents in waterproof containers and move valuable items to higher levels in your home (if possible). Clear drains and rain gutters to prevent flooding and leaks.
- Prepare a family emergency plan (that includes your pets!) ahead of storms.

Scan the QR code to create a Family Emergency Communication Plan from Ready.gov.



Ready.gov

For more health & safety tips, visit
<https://health.clintoncountyny.gov/nchealtheffect>
or scan the QR code.



Information in this guide was adapted from the
American Public Health Association (APHA, **www.APHA.org**).