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Reports: [2023 U.S. Brief](#), [Global Lancet Countdown Report](#)

Climate Change’s Escalating Daily, Deadly Toll on U.S. Public Health Demands Action, Say American Public Health and Medical Experts

Without action, U.S. communities face escalating threats to health and economic well-being, report warns

The Lancet Countdown’s 2023 U.S. Brief underscores the escalating threat of fossil fuel pollution and climate change to health, highlighting an 88% increase in heat-related mortality among older U.S. adults and calling for urgent, equitable climate action to mitigate this public health crisis.

The U.S. Brief builds on the 2023 report of [The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change](#), the latest comprehensive yearly analysis tracking the impact of climate change on human health across 47 indicators. The 2023 report also projects the health benefits that would come from limiting climate change and meeting the Paris Agreement targets, and the health harms of continuing to burn fossil fuels.

The 2023 report represents the work of 114 leading experts from 52 research institutions and UN agencies around the world including the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), providing the most up-to-date assessment of the links between health and climate change.

“There is overwhelming evidence presented in this most up-to-date Lancet Countdown assessment. Further expansion of fossil fuels is reckless and threatens the health and well-being of every American and people around the world”, said **Renee N. Salas, MD, MPH, MS**, an emergency medicine doctor, global report author, and senior author of the 2023 Lancet Countdown U.S. Brief. “The dangerous side effects from fossil fuels – disease and death – are far too costly for my patients and communities. A just transition away from fossil fuels is the treatment my patients desperately need.”

“The U.S. must double down on its efforts to end the use of fossil fuels, moving to a zero emission economy to protect public health from the harms of fossil fuel pollution,” said **Naomi S. Beyeler, PhD, MPH, MCP**, the lead author of the 2023 Lancet Countdown U.S. Brief. “Simultaneously, the U.S. must invest in public health to protect Americans from the growing harms of climate change impacts.”

Here are some key findings from the U.S. Brief:

- In 2020, fine particulate matter air pollution (PM_{2.5}) contributed to 32,400 deaths in the U.S. Fossil fuel combustion accounted for approximately 41.5% of these premature deaths attributed to human-caused PM_{2.5} pollution in the country.
- The monetized value of premature deaths due to PM_{2.5} pollution in the U.S. in 2020 was estimated to be \$151 billion.
- 2022 marked the warmest year ever recorded in the U.S., with average summer temperatures 2.3°F (1.3°C) warmer compared to the period of 1986-2005.
- Older adults (aged 65 and older) in the U.S. experienced a 138% increase in exposure to heatwaves (172 million more person-days) from 2013-2022, representing an additional 2.8 days of heatwave exposure per year compared to the 1986-2005 baseline.
- U.S. infants under one year old experienced a 61% increase in exposure to heatwaves (19 million more person-days) from 2013-2022, equivalent to an additional 3.2 heatwave days per year compared to the 1986-2005 baseline.
- Heat-related mortality for U.S. adults aged 65 and older increased by 88% in 2018-2022 compared to 2000-2004, in the absence of climate change-induced temperature increases, heat-related mortality would have been expected to increase 25% across this period.
- The monetized value of heat-related mortality in the U.S. in 2022 was estimated to be over \$11 billion. In 2022, heat exposure in the U.S. resulted in the loss of 2.9 billion potential labor hours.
- The transmission season for *Plasmodium falciparum* and *Plasmodium vivax* – two parasites that cause malaria – lengthened by 39% and 33.65%, respectively, in U.S. lowland areas** in 2013–2022 compared to 1951–1960.
- 9.3% of total U.S. coastline was suitable for *Vibrio* transmission in 2022. The total area of U.S. coastline suitable for *Vibrio* transmission at any point during the year was 44.4% higher than average suitability from 1982–2010.

URGENT ACTION IS NEEDED

1. The 2023 *Lancet* Countdown U.S. Brief presents the following recommendations to protect health and reduce inequitable climate change impacts:
2. Take action to reduce air pollution, simultaneously reducing the health risks from fossil fuels and reducing GHG emissions.
3. Protect health from future climate change by ending fossil fuel exploration and extraction, rapidly phasing out fossil fuel use, and ending fossil fuel subsidies.
4. Make protecting and enhancing human health a central consideration in the transition to renewable, non-combustion energy.
5. Invest in adaptation to protect people's health from the harms of climate change.

ABOUT THE LANCET COUNTDOWN US BRIEF

The [Lancet Countdown U.S. Brief](#) is produced by a working group composed of leading experts and researchers from over 80 American medical and public health schools, research institutes, advocacy organizations, and nonprofits. It combines original findings with U.S.-specific indicator data from the 2023 global Lancet Countdown report, as well as other recent scientific studies.