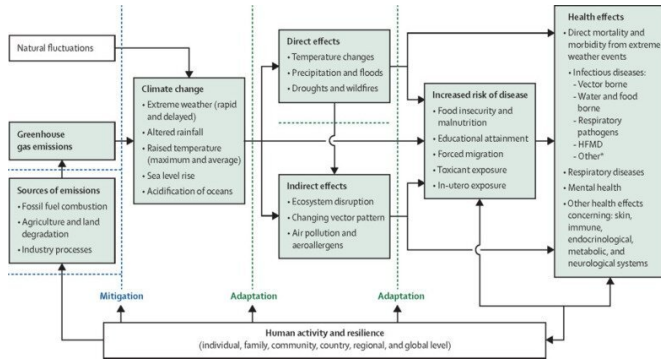


# How climate change affects children's health and well-being

22 March 2021, by Ida Rutström



Climate change and child health: an expanded framework: The dashed lines show where mitigation and adaptation can hinder the effects of climate change on child health and wellbeing. HFMD=Hand, foot, and mouth disease. \*Other infectious diseases, from mumps to bacterial meningitis, varicella viruses, and parasitic diseases.

Climate change can have a detrimental effect on children's health, yet there are few studies investigating how climate change affects child health. A recent study where researchers compiled 300 articles shows that child health is affected by both direct changes in the near environment, such as increased extreme weather, and by indirect effects, such as air pollution and changing ecosystems. The study was conducted by researchers at Karolinska Institutet and published in *The Lancet Planetary Health*.

"The changes not only lead to increased mortality and morbidity from a range of diseases, but can also lead to malnutrition, poverty and reduced opportunities to attend school, as climate change affects all parts of society on which children depend for good health. Furthermore, it is the already most [vulnerable children](#), in low-income countries, for example, who are at risk of bearing the greatest burden of climate change, says Daniel

Helldén, Ph.D. student at the Department of Global Public Health and first author of the article.

Due to the uncertainty of the studies that were compiled and the lack of important research, it is difficult to calculate an exact number for the link between climate change and [children's health](#). However, it is inevitable that children carry and will continue to bear a large part of the burden of disease from climate change.

"There is a need of more as well as better research on this issue. One of the most important conclusions in the article is of what research is missing in the field, adds Tobias Alfvén, associate professor at the Department of Global Public Health and last author.

For example, there is a lack of well-made longitudinal studies on [climate change](#) and children. We hope that together with researchers from other disciplines we can tackle these research issues together with interdisciplinary working methods."

**More information:** Daniel Helldén et al. Climate change and child health: a scoping review and an expanded conceptual framework, *The Lancet Planetary Health* (2021). DOI: [10.1016/S2542-5196\(20\)30274-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(20)30274-6)

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