



### **How Do Climate Change and Allergy Relate?**

According to the United Nations, the “average temperature of Earth’s surface is now about 1.1°C warmer than it was in the late 1800s (before the industrial revolution) and warmer than at any time in the last 100,000 years. The last decade (2011-2020) was the warmest on record, and each of the last four decades has been warmer than any previous decade since 1850.... Because the Earth is a system, where everything is connected, changes in one area can influence changes in all others.” (See <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change>)

Climate change is global, affecting everyone. Rising temperatures, warming oceans, rising sea levels, and accelerated melting of glaciers are some of the measurable effects of climate change, along with intense droughts, increased air pollution, water scarcity, earlier and more intense pollen seasons, severe fires, flooding, catastrophic storms, and declining biodiversity.

People with allergies and asthma are susceptible to these effects of climate change and must frequently adapt their health care as well as aspects of their daily lives. It is essential, therefore, that health care practitioners also adapt and find new approaches for managing allergies and asthma with consideration of changing climates and environments.

Specialists such as allergy/clinical immunology physicians can help their patients identify triggers, prevent worsening of symptoms, and maintain quality of life amidst changes in their environments. They can give proper advice to their patients as well as policymakers on how to face this growing concern.

Beyond the clinic, mitigating the effects of global warming will help prevent new or worsening allergies and symptoms. Improving air quality will decrease respiratory allergy suffering. Protecting and expanding biodiversity will help us protect our bodies. Learning about the relationship between humans and nature and understanding how that relationship affects both the health of humans and the environments we call home, can improve health for all.