

# World Health Day 2022: Our Planet, Our Health



Can we imagine a world where clean air, water and food is available to everyone? Where the economy is put at the service of health and well-being? Where cities are livable and people take responsibility for their own and the planet's health?

On World Health Day 2022, against the backdrop of the ongoing pandemic, the planetary environmental crisis, the onslaught of diseases such as cancer, asthma and heart disease, WHO intends to alert the global community to the urgent action needed to protect human and planetary health, and to strengthen the movement to create a society focused on human well-being.

WHO estimates that preventable environmental causes kill 13 million people worldwide each year. This includes the climate crisis, the greatest threat to human health. The climate crisis is also a health crisis.

The climate and health crisis is caused by our political, social, and economic decisions. As a result of burning fossil fuels, more than 90% of people breathe unhealthy air. As global temperatures rise, mosquito-borne diseases are spreading faster and further. Extreme weather events, land degradation, and water scarcity are forcing and displacing people and worsening their health. Pollutants and plastics are penetrating into the deepest depths of the world's oceans, the slopes of the highest mountains, and food production systems. The production of unhealthy processed foods and beverages, which account for one-third of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, is causing mass obesity, cancer and cardiovascular disease.

**As part of the “Our Planet, Our Health” campaign, WHO intends to encourage governments and the public to spread the word about what they are doing to protect the planet and their health and build a society of well-being.**

## **What can be done to protect the planet and health?**

### **Governments:**

- Prioritize human well-being and long-term environmental sustainability in all decision-making.
- Make well-being central to the work of all companies and organizations, and the main goal of social and environmental activities.
- Give up fossil fuel extraction. Stop exploring and developing new fossil fuel deposits and implement clean energy strategies.
- End fossil fuel subsidies. Redirect subsidies to public health.
- Tax those who pollute the environment. Create incentives to reduce carbon emissions.
- Implement the WHO Air Quality Recommendations.

- Provide electricity to public health facilities from renewable energy sources.
- Reduce air pollution to reduce the burden of diseases such as stroke, cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, and chronic and acute respiratory diseases, including asthma.
- Tax heavily processed foods and beverages that contain high levels of salt, sugars, and unhealthy fats.
- Implement policies to reduce food waste.
- Redirect agricultural subsidies to support sustainable production of healthy food.
- In urban areas, create green areas that promote physical activity and mental health.
- Make your intentions clear! Join the WHO environmental policy statement.
- Tobacco pollutes the planet and our lungs. Create smokeless urban environments and tax tobacco products.
- Develop policies to reduce waste and plastic.
- In order to improve preparedness and resilience to the climate crisis, include mental health and psychosocial support measures in climate change plans and strategies.

### **Companies:**

- Turn off lights in rooms at the end of the work day.
- Introduce remote working when possible.
- Eliminate the use of highly processed and prepackaged food products when catering to employees.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from operations.
- Protect, promote, and support breastfeeding. Breast milk is healthy and environmentally friendly food for your baby.
- Ensure employees have access to safe water.

### **Health care providers and health care facilities:**

- Promote efforts to reduce medical waste.
- Offer locally produced food in health care facilities

and ensure healthy diets by reducing consumption of carbonated beverages and highly processed and prepackaged foods.

- Ensure the decarbonization of health care facilities.
- Identify opportunities for energy conservation.
- Provide healthcare facilities with safe and clean water.
- Promote the purchase of environmentally friendly products that can be easily recycled or reused.
- Actively advocate for the prioritization of health in all aspects of climate policy.

### **Heads of Cities:**

- Improve the energy efficiency of buildings.
- Develop low-carbon public transportation.
- Build new bicycle and pedestrian paths.
- Protect biodiversity, develop new parks and gardens.
- Switch utilities to renewable energy sources.
- Make affordable clean energy available to low-income families and health care facilities.
- Partner with the local business community to support environmental sustainability.
- Regulate the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages in public places.

### **Individuals:**

- Our Planet, Our Health: Share Your Story
- Speak out, demand action on climate change to protect your health.
- Take action, inspire others, and support our five-point plan:
  1. Walk or bike to work at least once a week. Prefer public transportation.
  2. Use a renewable energy provider; do not heat indoor air above 21.5°C; turn off lights when you leave a room.
  3. Buy fresh produce from local producers and avoid

highly processed foods and beverages.

4. Tobacco kills and pollutes the environment. Refuse to use tobacco.
5. Buy fewer plastic products and use recyclable grocery bags.