

Climate & Mental Health for Adults



Climate Change has been deemed the most significant public health threat of our time, affecting respiratory and cardiovascular health and mental wellbeing, increasing instances of vector-borne diseases, and harm from extreme weather events. Health Professionals are uniquely positioned to lead by example (and encourage their patients) to adopt climate friendly, healthy habits.

The TWO and TWENTY Challenge

The goal is to be active for at least Two hours a week, being physically active at least 20+ minutes in length. Research shows that people who spend at least 2 hours per week have better health outcomes.¹ [Take Part Here](#)

HOW NATURE HELPS MENTAL HEALTH

- *Nature Helps Your Body Relax* - Within as little time as 15 minutes, the human body will see a reduction in **cortisol levels** and heart rate variability. The body does not respond the same way in urban environments.²
- *Find Happiness Among Trees*- When connecting with nature and the natural environment, 9 out of 10 Canadians report feeling happier / in a better emotional state after spending time with nature.³
- *Restorative*- Exposure to nature has widespread psychological benefits, including positive responses for individuals' emotional problems, and can help when individuals become overwhelmed.⁴
- *Helps Treat the Whole Person*- Research indicates that mechanisms underpinning the positive relationship between greenspace and health may include sensory-perceptual and immunological processes, air quality, physical activity, stress, and social integration.⁵

CLIMATE & HEALTH

Tips when talking about climate & health. The subject of climate change can feel overwhelming.

These approaches can help link the impact of personal choices on our health and the health of our environment.

- Respect the environment—and the patients you help. As individuals spend more time in nature, they are more likely to engage in practices that limit their impact on the climate at both a local and global level.
- Outdoor Activities and reducing climate impact can be as simple as "This for That" by substituting outdoor activities for indoor ones.
- Apply the **Precautionary Principle**, developed initially to protect the environment and help to guide health protection activities. Applying the precautionary principle means that risk reduction activities with individuals, families, and communities should minimize creating negative environmental and avoid hazards while maximizing the overall positive effects on people's health and wellbeing. An example of this is riding your bike, riding you bike in high traffic areas can come with more risk then riding your bike on a trail system or in a park.
- Engage with nature in a way that has an impact on you. Love the water? go for a swim, and think about how you can protect the water for future generations.