

EARTH DAY

APRIL 22

APRIL 22 IS EARTH DAY, A DAY CREATED TO RAISE AWARENESS OF

environmental issues and encourage the protection of the planet. The climate is changing, including shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Human activities, including burning fossil fuels, deforestation and factory farming, have been the main driver of climate change since the 1800s.

The average temperature of the Earth's surface is now about 1.2°C higher than it was in the late 1800s – warmer than ever. However, rising temperatures are only a small part of climate change. Other consequences include fresh water scarcity and droughts, severe forest fires, rising sea levels, flooding, melting of the polar ice caps, catastrophic storms and declining biodiversity. Experts agree that limiting global temperature rise to no more than 1.5°C would help avoid the worst of the impacts, however, with the policies currently in place, the Earth could see a temperature increase of up to 3.1°C by the end of the century.

Impacts on health care and connection to Doctors Nova Scotia's work

Climate change also presents major threats to health care. More frequent and intense climate events are increasing noncommunicable diseases, the emergence and spread of infectious diseases, overall health emergencies and deaths. Additionally, we know that climate-related health risks are disproportionately felt by the most vulnerable populations, particularly Indigenous Peoples, due to their close relationship with the environment and its resources.

Resources:

- In 2023, Dalhousie University, alongside its counterparts in the Association of Faculties of Medicine in Canada, signed the Academic Health Institutions' Declaration on Planetary Health, which declares the health of the planet a Code Red emergency and calls for immediate implementation of planetary health education and research, and the transition to climate-resilient and low-carbon health systems in order to build a healthy, sustainable, and just future for all.
- Doctors Nova Scotia Section of Planetary Health – email Dr. Desmond Leddin at Desmond.Leddin@Dal.Ca
- Earth Day 2025: earthday.ca/april-22/campaign
- Everyday actions to help limit climate change (United Nations): www.un.org/en/actnow/ten-actions



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