



Heat and Drought

Climate change is increasing the number of extremely hot days in Massachusetts and temperatures are projected to rise significantly over the next century. Generally, extreme heat is any temperature over 90 degrees—which is when we see big jumps in heat-related illnesses and deaths.

Rising temperatures can cause major changes in climate patterns. For example, long periods without rain can prevent wells and reservoirs from recharging with fresh water, concentrating harmful pollutants and bacteria in the water that we drink and where we swim. The increase of bacteria and pollutants in water can harm aquatic life and cause gastrointestinal illness.

The dusty, dry conditions and wildfires that happen due to droughts can also cause poor air quality, that irritates the lungs and make respiratory illnesses, like asthma, worse. Poor air quality can also increase the risk of respiratory infections like bronchitis.



Who is at higher risk?

- People over age 65
- Children under age 5
- Pregnant people
- People with compromised immune systems

What can we do about it?

- Install water-efficient appliances and plumbing fixtures
- Consider landscaping with native and drought tolerant plants
- Follow any water use restrictions issued by your water supplier
- Test water quality in private wells on a regular basis
- Practice water conservation

