

Children's Health /Climate Change Podcasts

Third in A Series of Three Podcasts to air during October 2015, focusing on the impacts of Climate Change on Children's Health

Guest: Dr. Laura Anderko, Director of the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment

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PODCAST #3 - -Climate Change / Flooding - Precipitation – Children's Health Issues

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**HOST:** Hello: I'm Prentiss Ward, EPA's Children's Health Coordinator in the Mid-Atlantic Region, and welcome to Environment Matters, EPA's series of environmental podcasts. As we continue our Children's Health Month Climate Change podcasts, I am delighted to welcome back Dr. Laura Anderko, (pronounced - AN- DUR- KOO ?) , Director of the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment, and a 2013 White House Champion of Change, for our third and final podcast on Climate Change as it relates to Children's Health.

**34:34 – 34:40**

**HOST:** Your previous discussions focused on climate change impacts and heat events. Are there other climate related impacts that we need to be concerned about?

**34:40 – 35:13**

*Dr. Anderko:* Absolutely, climate change has contributed to a rise in a variety of extreme weather events including higher intensity tropical storms and heavier rainfalls particularly in some locations in the mid-Atlantic region. Scientists are projecting that climate change will increase the frequency and the intensity of heavy rainstorms which will put many communities at risk for decimation from floods.

**35:13 – 36:03**

*Dr. Anderko:* Flooding can also cause a range of health risks and impacts such as contaminated drinking water, increased disease carrying insects, moldy houses and just generally community disruption. So as rains become heavier, streams and lakes can overflow increasing the risk of water borne pathogens or diseases that can be transferred to our drinking water and it can also trigger sewage overflows. And as you may imagine, children are much more vulnerable to all of these because they depend on adults and society to protect them from these disasters.

**HOST:** What should parents and/or caregivers consider in preparing for extreme weather events?

**38:19 – 40:10**

*Dr. Anderko:* It's important for every family to understand what the risks are for where they live whether it's a wildfire or a flood. In the case of flooding, every family needs a plan including how kids, if kids are at school, how they are going to get home from school or what the school has in place to protect their children. In regards to the direct impacts, once the family has a plan for safety and in many cases the electricity goes out, every family needs an emergency response kit in their home. Flashlights, food to last a couple days, water. Also, once the family knows it's safe, is to really find out about water quality issues - how did the city or the community respond to the threat. There is imminent danger in flooding many times when there is drought and then there is a lot of precipitation and so everybody needs to have a clear understanding of what their resources are but also their local risks if they are in fact in danger of flooding. This is particularly important for families that live near waterways, lakes, rivers, even some streams that can swell very quickly and need to have a safety plan in place for escaping and in some cases surviving if it's severe enough.

**HOST:** What message would you like the listeners to take away from this podcast series?

**40:22 – 41:11**

*Dr. Anderko:* The take away message is that climate is all about health. It's a matter of health and if we protect our planet we will protect our health and so we need to support the clean power plan and we need to advocate for renewable energy sources and to find out what our state is planning, how our state is planning to address reduction of carbon pollution and to really consider that not only is climate change a matter of health but we must also protect the future - which is our children and consider the health impacts of climate change on kids.

**HOST:** What would the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment like to see improve over the next couple years?

**43:48 – 44:27**

*Dr. Anderko:* The Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment for number one would like to see clean air, cleaner air - we've made great strides

and we are seeing the positive health impacts. However, we are also seeing an increase with the climate changes, increased heat, precipitation, mold, and immediate health threats, so what we would like to see in the future is less carbon pollution, less greenhouse gases and better health for kids so they can lead healthy lives.

**HOST:** Dr. Anderko, thank you for being our guest and for sharing your insight on this very important topic, and thank you to our listeners. Additional information – *including a link to this series of podcasts* - can be found on the Children’s Health and Climate Change websites at EPA.gov. (*Music fades*)

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