

Climate and Health E-News

Raising Awareness about Climate Change and Public Health in the Circumpolar North

No. 109, April 13, 2012

Circumpolar Climate Events Map – See this week’s circumpolar climate news, incidents and events.

[Center for Climate and Health](#)

Climate change linked to waterborne diseases in Inuit communities *April 5, 2012.* As global warming triggers heavier rainfall and faster snowmelt in the Arctic, Inuit communities in Canada are reporting more cases of illness attributed to pathogens that have washed into the surface water and groundwater. For each of the communities studied the team documented local weather patterns, conducted weekly water testing, and searched clinical records. The findings are an example of how indigenous peoples are disproportionately affected by climate change. [National Geographic](#)

More polar bears with hair loss found *April 12, 2012.* As of Wednesday 27% of the polar bears captured by federal researchers this year have had evidence of alopecia (hair loss) or other skin conditions. Samples of effected animals are being collected for analysis. This cause remains a mystery, as well as whether it is related to the on-going seal and walrus illness. [Alaska Dispatch](#)

Ecosystems dependent on snowy winters are most threatened by climate change *April 6, 2012.* A study of 19 forested watersheds across the United States found that the most vulnerable areas to climate change are arid regions where mountain snowpack is the primary source of water. A significant amount of stream water is lost to evaporation. This research shows both the vulnerability and resilience of headwater streams, and provides insight into future management challenges for public water supplies. [ScienceDaily](#)

Even small summer temperature changes may affect elder health April 9, 2012, A study from the Harvard School of Public Health suggests that temperature changes can shorten life expectancy for elderly people with chronic medical conditions. While previous studies have focused on short term effects, this is the first to study longer-term effects of climate change on life expectancy. [ScienceDaily](#)

Video of the Week: *What are giardia lamblia and giardiasis?* *March 13, 2010,* The above National Geographic article about waterborne illness brings to mind the fact that potential carriers of waterborne illness in the Arctic are expanding. Here is a two minute video that explains the illness *giardiasis*, also widely known in widely in Alaska as “beaver fever”. [YouTube](#)

Climate and Health E-News is received around the circumpolar north by people who are interested in climate change impacts and public health. For back issues click [here](#). To subscribe or unsubscribe, please click [here](#).

Regards – Mike

Michael Brubaker

Center for Climate and Health

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Tel. 907-729-2464

<http://www.anthc.org/chs/ces/climate/index.cfm>

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