

**Alaska Center for Climate and Health - E-News**  
**Raising Awareness about Climate Change Impacts on Public Health**  
**No. 59, March 17, 2011**

**Arctic on the Verge of Record Ozone Loss** *March 14, 2011* - For several years scientists have pointed to a connection between ozone loss and climate change. While the lower atmosphere has been warming, temperatures in the upper atmosphere have been getting colder. Now researchers from the [Alfred Wegener Institute](#) for Polar and Marine Research have discovered that unusually low temperatures in the Arctic ozone layer have initiated massive ozone depletion. "Our measurements show that about half of the ozone that was present above the Arctic has been destroyed over the past weeks. Ozone is a trace gas that protects the Earth's surface against ultraviolet radiation from the sun. Because of the loss of Arctic ozone, special attention should be devoted to sufficient UV protection in the spring this year. [ScienceDaily](#) See [CIESIN](#) for health effects information.

**State Public Health Bulletin on Earthquakes, Tsunami, and Radionuclide Preparedness** *March 16, 2011* - The earthquake and tsunami that severely damaged the coast of Japan on March 11th, 2011 provides a reminder of the importance of emergency preparedness. Furthermore, the ongoing threat of a substantial radiation release from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant necessitates public health officials, health care providers, and other responders to re-familiarize themselves with radiation emergency preparedness and response measures. [State of Alaska Epidemiology Bulletin](#)

**Pinpointing Air Pollution's Effects on the Heart** *March 11, 2011* - Scientists are untangling how the tiniest pollution particles -- which we take in with every breath we breathe -- affect our health, making people more vulnerable to cardiovascular and respiratory problems. While scientists know that air pollution can aggravate heart problems, showing exactly how it does so has been challenging. Scientists have now shown that in people with diabetes, breathing ultrafine particles can activate platelets, cells in the blood that normally reduce bleeding from a wound, but can contribute to cardiovascular disease. [ScienceDaily](#)

**Arctic Plankton Blooming Up to 50 days Sooner** *March 8, 2011* According to [The Washington Post](#), a new satellite study of worldwide phytoplankton blooms has found that the microscopic plants, which form a major foundation of the marine food web, are blooming up to 50 days sooner in oceans across much of the Arctic lately than they did 14 years ago. The findings indicate one biological impact of warming in the Arctic, researchers say. "The trend is obvious and significant, and in my mind there is no doubt it is related to the retreat of the ice," said the study's leader Mati Kahru, who published the work in the journal *Global Change Biology*. [Alaska Dispatch](#)

**Alaska Climate Events Map** – Visit our [Google Map](#) to see incidents and events that have occurred around Alaska this month, with relevance for climate and health.

The *Climate and Health E-News* is received around the circumpolar north by people who are interested in climate impact on health. For back issues or to join the mailing list visit our [website](#) or contact us via e-mail or by phone.

*Regards - Mike*

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