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## Celebrate Earth Day 2024: Climate Change Tips

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April 22nd is Earth Day. This annual celebration honors the achievements of the environmental movement and raises awareness of the need to protect Earth's natural resources for future generations.

Earth Day is also an opportunity to raise awareness of the climate and older adults. [Extreme temperatures](#) are the deadliest weather-related event. Each year, an estimated 12,000 Americans die due to extreme heat. Adults over 60 are estimated to account for 80% of these heat-related deaths.

In addition to extreme heat, extreme weather events like hurricanes negatively impact older adults. For example, three-quarters of people who died during [Hurricane Katrina](#) and subsequent flooding around New Orleans were over 60, even though that age group made up only 15% of the population.

To prepare for extreme heat or other weather events and mitigate risks, [the Environmental Protection Agency](#) recommends the following to help decrease health risks for older adults.

- **Stay cool and hydrated.** Drink enough water. Wear loose, light-colored clothing, and stay in air-conditioned spaces as much as possible. If you don't have an air conditioner, reach out to your friends and family.
- **Stay informed about air quality.** Use [AirNow](#) to check local air pollution levels and make informed choices about outdoor activities and possible health impacts.
- **Prevent bites.** Use insect repellents to help avoid tick and bug bites.
- **Make a plan.** [Create an emergency supply kit](#) with medical equipment and records, food, water, and a first-aid kit. Set up a [support network](#) and update your family, friends, and caretakers on your whereabouts.
- **Check-in with neighbors, friends, and family.** If you know someone who lives in an assisted living or senior housing facility, be sure they have

emergency supplies, a plan for shelter, and transportation during extreme weather events. Check-in with elderly loved ones or neighbors, mainly if they live alone and have health conditions that could put them at risk during or after an extreme weather event.

- **Be aware of your local community resources.** Many local [senior services agencies](#) provide shelter and transportation resources for older adults during extreme weather. If you have a disability, contact your local emergency management office to see if you can get assistance during an emergency.

On Earth Day, it's vital to recognize the significant impact of extreme weather conditions on older adults.

### For More Information

- Learn more about the [history](#) of Earth Day.
- Test your environmental literacy [here](#).

Image



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Virginia Geriatric Education Center

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<https://vcoa.chp.vcu.edu/vgec>

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