



YUROK TRIBE CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLAN FOR WATER AND AQUATIC RESOURCES

Adults, elders, subsistence/ commercial fishers
have an increased risk of **heart disease**.

HEART DISEASE



TRIBAL POPULATION GROUPS

Infants and Children



Pregnant Women



Adults



Elders



Subsistence / Commercial Fishers



Gatherers



Ceremonial Participants



ENVIRONMENTAL & INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Impacts to traditional aquatic foods:

Less access caused by changes in harvesting time differing from traditional knowledge, loss of places to harvest.

As species move with changing climate conditions Tribal members may be unable to move with them due to legal constraints on their fishing and gathering rights.

Less availability because of loss of species habitats resulting in population declines.

Lower quality from existing environmental toxins being released into waterways and from overfishing resulting in less mature stocks.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

Warming air temperatures
Warming stream, river, and ocean temperatures
Ocean acidification
More intense periods of droughts
Increasing wildfire risk and more air pollution

EXPOSURE PATHWAY

Less access, availability, and quality of traditional aquatic foods.
Less healthy diet due to shift away from traditional aquatic foods.
Decrease in physical activity will occur over time as species populations and practices decline.
Air pollution exposure from wildfires increases heart disease risk.

HEALTH OUTCOME

Climate change may increase risk of heart disease contributing to higher rates of illness and death.

INDIVIDUAL & SOCIAL CONTEXT

Existing health conditions among the Yurok Tribal members show high rates of heart disease risk factors, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and diabetes.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death among American Indian/Alaska Native populations.

Existing social trends increase heart disease risk, including tobacco use, and low income, low education and high unemployment resulting in less access to healthy foods.

Limited access to or distrust of the healthcare system to provide heart disease screening and prevention results in less access to necessary preventive care.



HEART DISEASE

“Heart disease” refers to many illnesses including heart attack, chest pain, or other heart muscle problems, and is the leading cause of death among Alaska Natives/American Indians. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, physical inactivity, and obesity are key risk factors. Yurok Tribal members have high rates of the risk factors which increase their risk of heart disease.



ADAPTATION STRATEGIES

Listed below are strategies that can be implemented to reduce the risk of heart disease among Tribal members.

Institutional

Look for opportunities to enhance “food sovereignty” to return to sustainable food harvesting and replace need for commodity foods.

Provide opportunities for physical activity.

Continue or enhance opportunities for fish sharing, including provision of fish for single or pregnant moms and elders.

Consider improved reporting of heart disease in order to understand the problem and obtain funds to target prevention of these illnesses.

Explore ways to increase healthcare funding to expand access for Tribal members.

Consider designing and implementing culturally grounded educational materials to further the reach of messages to prevent heart disease and its risk factors modeling after the National Heart, Lung, Blood Institute’s “Your Choice for Change!”.

Consider providing regular healthcare screening for key risk factors of heart disease, including free health clinic days, health fairs through the schools and cultural centers.

Individual

Consider eating more traditional foods when available, particularly fish, as a high quality protein, low fat option with excellent health-protective components (e.g., Omega 3).

Consider seeing a health professional regularly when possible (to catch health problems early).

Consider increasing physical activity to maintain a healthy body weight.

If you are a smoker, consider quitting to eliminate an important risk factor for heart disease.

“I was born and raised on the River. My life is woven with the river and its fish and people. If the River is sick, so am I. We are merely a reflection of the river, and will never be healthy again until it is.”

— Yurok Female, born 1949

To view full report: http://www.yuroktribe.org/departments/ytep/com_eco_reports.htm