



**HOW SENIORS CAN
COPE WITH CLIMATE
CHANGE**

The Global Warming Age Gap

- A 2018 Gallup Poll found that **attitudes** and perceptions of risk around climate change **varied by age group**:
 - **70%** of adults age **18 -34** said they worry about global warming.
 - Only **56%** of those age **55** and up worry about global warming.
- Since 1900, the percentage of Americans age 65 and older nearly quadrupled (from 4% in 1900 to 16% in 2019), and the number increased more than 17 times (from 3 million to 54 million). Further increases are expected.

Why Should Seniors Worry?

Seniors are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change for **health and financial reasons**:

- **Slower body metabolism** and cell regeneration capacity affects immune system
- **Limited mobility** can affect ability to evacuate in emergencies
- **Communication difficulties** (hearing, sight, speech) or decline in mental abilities can lead to slower reaction times in emergencies
- People on **fixed incomes** have limited resources to deal with change

A young female doctor in a white lab coat is examining an elderly woman. The doctor is standing and has her hand on the patient's forehead. The patient is sitting in a wheelchair, wearing a green sweater and a red blanket. The background shows a home care setting with shelves, a red vase, and a yellow alarm clock.

Climate Change Health Impacts on Seniors

Extreme Heat = increased hospitalizations and mortality among those over 65

Heat-Related Deaths by Age Group, British Columbia, June 20 - July 29, 2021

Age Group	# of Deaths
<40	2
40-49	13
50-59	42
60-69	127
70-79	160
80-89	149
90+	76
Total	569

- Extreme Heat increases danger for elderly with **chronic conditions** such as congestive heart failure, high blood pressure, diabetes.



- People on **fixed incomes** may be reluctant to turn on air conditioners, even if they have them

Storms/Hurricanes = higher mortality rates in seniors

- In Hurricanes Andrew & Katrina, about **half of all deaths** were people over 75, due to **drowning** or **acute or chronic medical conditions**.
- **Electricity outages** can affect electric powered medical equipment, limit access to food and medicine.
- Heavy rainfall/flooding can cause **water contamination**. Elderly are more susceptible to gastrointestinal illnesses and water borne diseases (e.g. cholera, malaria, typhoid in developing countries)

Ticks & Mosquitos

are expanding their range due to warming temperatures

- Ticks can spread **Lyme Disease**, which is increasing among older adults



- Mosquitos can spread **West Nile Virus** and **St. Louis Encephalitis**, which elderly are more susceptible to due to weakened immune systems

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Poor Air Quality

impacts elderly with chronic conditions

- **Warming** temperatures make it easier for **ground level ozone** to form
- **Wildfires** dramatically increase **particulate matter**. Those most hospitalized for problems related to particulate matter are over 75.
- Both forms of pollution impact those with myocardial infarctions, diabetes, COPD.
- Both increase the rate of heart attacks, esp. among those with diabetes or obesity.

Psychological Factors

- Thinking about climate change can create **fear and anxiety**, feelings of powerlessness.

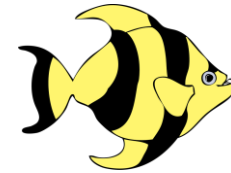


- Seniors may feel **guilt and worry** about the world they're leaving for their children and grandchildren.

A two-story house with light-colored siding, a white garage door, and a front porch. The house has a gabled roof and a dormer window. The text "Other Climate Change Impacts On Seniors" is overlaid on the image. The word "Other" is in black, "Climate Change" is in black, "Impacts" is in purple, and "On Seniors" is in purple.

Other Climate Change Impacts On Seniors

- Hotter weather and rising sea levels may impact **travel opportunities**. “Bucket list” destinations like Venice, the Everglades, Glacier, or the Great Barrier Reef may no longer be viable.



- Heat and poor air quality may lead to becoming more **housebound**, affecting fitness and social interactions.



- Extreme weather may require significant **upgrades to homes** (A/C, shutters, roof) and rising **insurance rates** (fire, flood), affecting seniors’ ability to “age in place”.

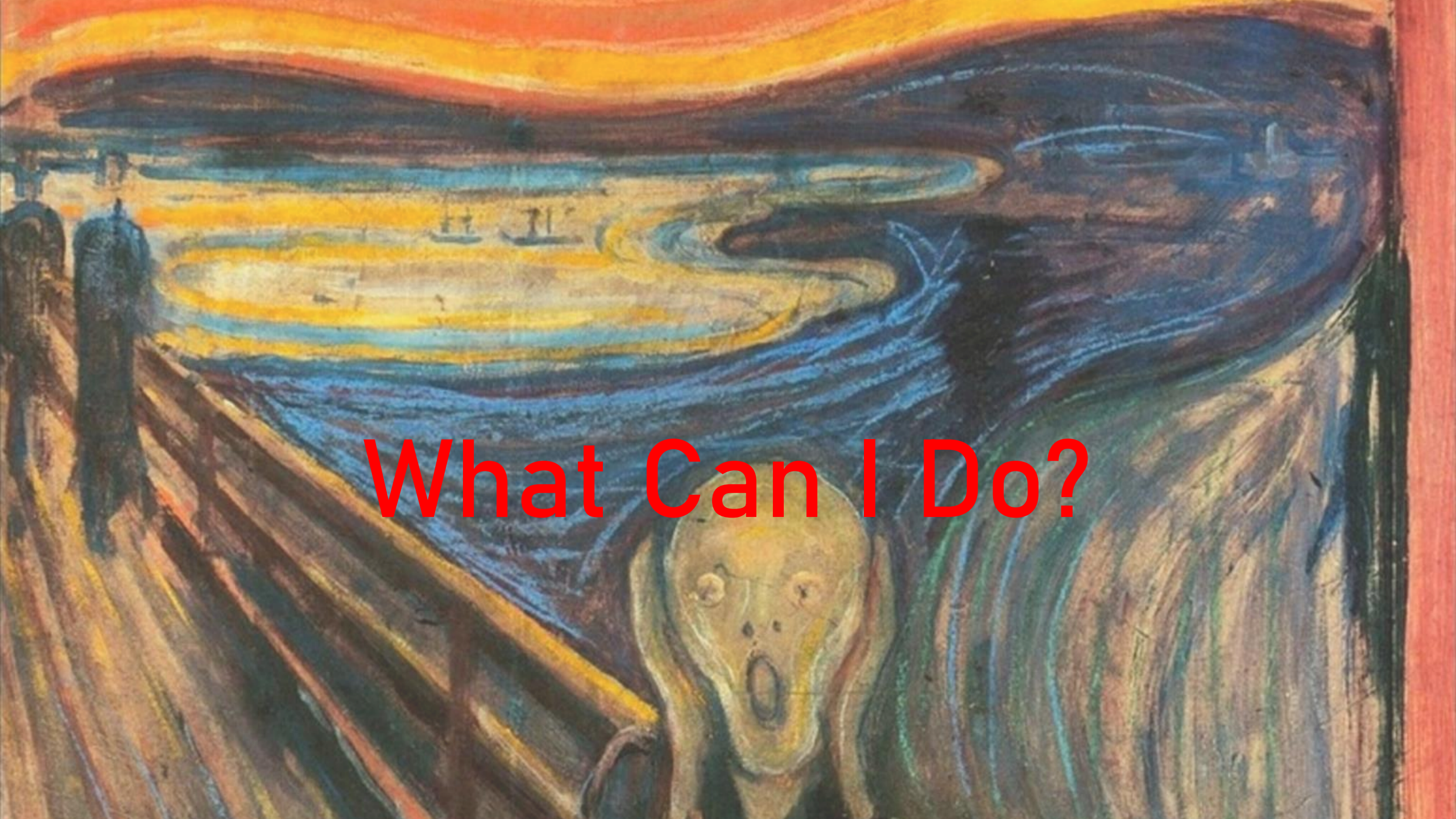
- Extreme weather (drought, fires, floods) impacts **farming**, causing **higher prices** for corn, soy, grapes, and vulnerable specialty goods like coffee and tea, avocados and almonds, affecting those on limited incomes.



- Higher temperatures and water shortages may impact where people want to move in **retirement**.



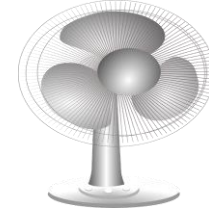
- Climate mitigation creates new opportunities for **Green Investments** in clean energy funds, green technology, and environmental sustainability.

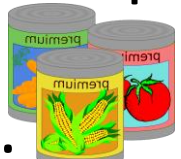


What Can I Do?

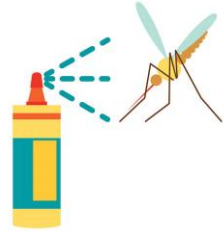
For Your Health

- Take heat warnings seriously. Make sure you have a working **air conditioner**, or know of nearby **evacuation centers** with A/C if needed. Know that SDG&E sometimes enforces **brownouts** when demand is high. Get a **battery operated fan**.



- Keep an **emergency kit** handy in case electricity goes off: flashlights, batteries (check expiration dates), foods that don't need refrigeration or cooking.  Keep 5-6 gallons of **water**, in case of water contamination.

- Keep CDC recommended **insect repellants** on hand to deter ticks and mosquitos.



- Buy a good **air purifier**, for use in event of wildfires. (Look for HEPA filter; passive filter which can be changed; should not emit ozone, which is bad for health; **avoid** “HEPA-like” or “HEPA-type” filters.)
- Switch to **methane-free electric heating and cooking**. **Natural gas is bad for your health**, and emits methane (more powerful global warming agent than carbon dioxide)



For Your Home: “Weatherproofing”

- **Keep vegetation trimmed**, with “fire break” around home.



- **Invest in your house**: thicker insulation, efficient air conditioning, energy efficient windows, upgraded roof. Consider solar panels.
- **Shop assertively for insurance**, considering higher deductibles.



For Your Peace of Mind



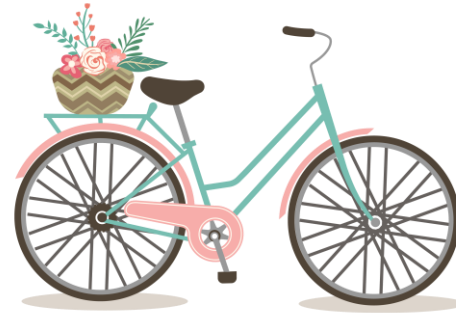
- Don't allow yourself to be overwhelmed by the enormity of the problem. The best fix for anxiety is to **DO SOMETHING**.
- Which leads us to our final topic

For the Earth



- When possible, **park your car** for trips under a mile. Walking and cycling are good for your health.



- Consider an **electric bike or auto**.



- Take **public transit** when feasible.

- **Unplug** electricity vampires. Stereo components, phone chargers, TVs, etc. draw power even when turned off.

The 3 Rs: Reduce – Reuse – Recycle

- **Eat less meat.** Cutting back your meat consumption to 3 servings per week can significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. 
- Consider **buying pre-owned** clothing, furniture, autos, appliances, etc. that don't require more water/energy to produce, or use up more of the earth's resources. 
- When you buy new, buy **good quality** items that don't require frequent replacing.
- Check out <https://wastefreesd.org/> to find out how and where to recycle just about anything in San Diego.

- Write **letters to the Editor**



- Sign up for **FUUSD Climate Justice news and meetings** today. (Contact rheakuhlman2@gmail.com or arminkuhlman396@gmail.com).

- **Attend our virtual Climate Justice Planning Meeting tomorrow 2pm**
(<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86878782967?pwd=aHFEdUZXd1JZYVplcHpabFVHWk9yUT09>)

- Sign up for **Action Alerts** to oppose climate warming initiatives such as new oil and gas pipelines, and to support climate calming moves such as incentives for electric vehicles and solar panels, building electrification.

A Few Local Eco Resources for Action Alerts

- San Diego 350 <https://sandiego350.org/>
- San Diego Sierra Club sandiegosierraclub.org
- San Diego Climate Action Campaign climateactioncampaign.org
- SD Environmental Health Coalition <https://environmentalhealth.org>
- I Love a Clean San Diego cleansd.org

Donate to Local or National Eco Organizations

- Sierra Club (National) <https://www.sierraclub.org>
- Earth Justice <https://www.earthjustice.org>
- Natural Resources Defense Council <https://www.nrdc.org>
- Nature Conservancy <https://www.nature.org>
- Environmental Defense Fund <https://www.edf.org>
- Greenpeace <https://www.greenpeace.org>



INVEST



- **Socially Conscious Investing** allows reasonable rates of return while putting your values to work.
- Here are some options, but **this is NOT INVESTMENT ADVICE.**
- **Please consult your financial advisor for information on fund performance, risk, etc.**

A Few Resources for Green Investing

- **Green America** has helpful resources on better banking, socially responsible investing and shareholder activism; and also partners with Natural Investments' **The Heart Rating** of socially responsible mutual funds to assess their **ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance)** performance. <https://www.greenamerica.org/finance>
- **Morningstar** has useful resources on **sustainability ratings and ESG investment data** for about 20,000 mutual funds and ETFs. ..<https://www.morningstar.com>
- **Follow This** – <https://www.follow-this.org> is a Netherlands-based non-profit that allows Green Investors to buy **one share of a Big Oil** company stock. Investors give Follow This their proxy vote, to **vote on resolutions at Big Oil shareholder meetings that align with the Paris Climate Accords**.

- **Engine No. 1** – <https://engine1.com> is an investment firm purpose-built to create long-term value by **driving positive eco impact through active ownership**. It recently got **three climate activists elected to the board of Exxon**, despite Exxon's opposition.
- **Green Century Funds** – <https://greencentury.com> – Has a 30-year track record that combines a **fossil fuel free sustainable investing strategy** with **shareholder advocacy** and **support of environmental nonprofits**. One of the oldest eco funds.
- **Domini Funds** is a women led firm specializing in **social and ecological impact investments**.
<https://www.domini.org>
- **PAX World Funds** focuses on **investments in the transition to a more sustainable economy**.
<https://impaxam.com>
- **Vanguard** and **Fidelity** each have **several ESG funds that focus on sustainability**.
<https://investor.vanguard.com/investing/esg> and <https://fidelity.com>

There's Lots You Can Do



- **Reduce** your personal carbon (and methane) footprint
- **Protect** yourself and your property
- **Invest** in a carbon (and methane) free world.



Thank You