



# PLANETARY HEALTH IS HUMAN HEALTH REPORT:

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2022 Edition-Executive Summary



# PLANETARY HEALTH IS HUMAN HEALTH

The health of our planet and the health of every person on it are inextricably linked. Climate change threatens immense damage to the planet, and to the health of everyone on it, further stretching the health systems on which we rely.

The severity of the impact that climate change is already having on human health is daunting, and this impact will only deepen as the climate crisis progresses.

**TODAY, NEARLY 13 MILLION DEATHS PER YEAR ARE LINKED TO ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS SUCH AS AIR POLLUTION, INFECTIOUS DISEASES, EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS, FORCED DISPLACEMENT, FOOD INSECURITY AND PRESSURES ON MENTAL HEALTH<sup>1</sup>.**



2022 has also seen the climate and health agenda further battered by world crises, from the war in Ukraine and resulting energy crisis and food shortages, to supply continuity challenges, looming recession and devastating wildfires, heatwaves and floods.

In the face of these external pressures, Reckitt is examining what role we can play in reducing the impact of climate change on health. We are only a small part of the wider health and climate ecosystems but, as a global consumer hygiene, health and nutrition company, our brands reach millions of people every day.

We can and will continue to play our part in creating better health, hygiene and nutrition for people and communities. This helps us all to be more prepared and resilient to meet the challenges climate change creates for our health.



<sup>1</sup>World Health Organisation (2016). Preventing disease through healthy environments: a global assessment of the burden of disease from environmental risks. [A. Prüss-Ustün, J. Wolf, F. Corvalán, R. Bos & M. P. Neira]. Retrieved from: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/204585>

# HOW DO PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THE LINK BETWEEN CLIMATE AND HEALTH?

To understand how we can better help people protect themselves from the health impacts of climate change, Reckitt commissioned new quantitative research in the UK, USA, UAE and India, to explore how people perceive the health threat from climate change, what actions they are taking themselves as a result and what measures they want to see from businesses and government.

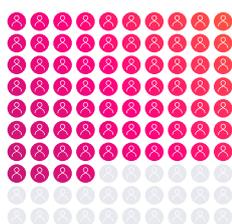
Our research found that:

## The public recognise the connection between climate change and health

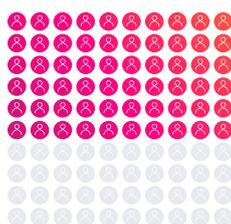
While the **vast majority (79%)** of the public agree that climate change and people's health are connected, only **62%** believe that climate change **is already negatively affecting** the health of people in their country.



Age appears to be a key factor in determining people's attitude to climate change and health, with **74% of respondents under 35** believing that **climate change and their health are connected**, compared to only **60% of those over 54**.



respondents under 35



respondents over 54

When asked what issues are the top threats to their country's healthcare system, the **impacts of climate change** were most often identified as the one of the top three issues, with **39% of respondents** placing it in their top three concerns. This was followed by **poor diet and exercise (32%)**, and **population growth (31%)**.



**39%**  
impacts of climate change



**32%**  
poor diet and exercise



**31%**  
population growth

## People want to see action on climate and health prioritised by governments and welcome support by businesses

People don't just support action on climate and health, they see it as a priority. Healthcare and climate change rank as people's second and third most pressing current priorities for government, behind only cost of living / economic recovery.



**27% of respondents** chose governments as the most responsible actor for tackling climate change, **followed by 26%** who thought that society as a whole was most responsible.

There is therefore a clear mandate for governments to deliver on climate and health. This will likely only grow as climate change, and its resultant health impacts, becomes more severe.

The public want help from businesses on the issues of health and climate. **8 in 10** people welcome information from brands on how to protect themselves and their family from climate health threats and to reduce their own impact on climate change.



## People are taking positive action to protect their health from climate change impacts, but more can be done

- People are already taking action to adopt positive behaviours to protect themselves from the health impacts of climate change. Encouragingly, over **90%** of people regularly or occasionally wash their hands, clean surfaces before preparing food and use disinfectant cleaning products in their homes.
- There are important differences between those activities that are taken regularly and those that are taken occasionally. For example, in the UK, **83%** of people use self-care to treat mild illnesses at least occasionally, but this drops to only **47%** of people who do so regularly.
- As the toll of climate change creates wider health impacts, consumers recognise there are other behaviours they need to dial up: **two thirds (67%)** recognise that **washing their hands with soap or sanitiser will become increasingly important in the future**.
- Those who believe that climate change and their personal health were connected were far more likely to engage in positive behaviours than those who did not believe that climate change is connected to their personal health. **80%** of people who believe that climate change and their health were connected **wore face masks** at least occasionally, compared to only **40%** of those who did not.

# WHAT IS RECKITT DOING TO HELP BUILD CLIMATE RESILIENT HEALTH SYSTEMS?

The inextricable link between planetary and human health drives Reckitt's purpose to protect, heal and nurture in the relentless pursuit of a cleaner, healthier world.

To play our part in building climate resilient health systems, we are **Mitigating**; **Adapting** and **Anticipating**:

## MITIGATING

**Our impact on the natural world** – Through our science-based 2030 ambitions, we are working to mitigate the impact of our own business and supply chain, as well as helping our customers mitigate their own impact on the natural world.

Through our purpose led brands, we are innovating our products to make their lifecycle more sustainable, and engaging with millions of people each day, helping them to take **small actions that add up**.



## ADAPTING

**Adapting to the impacts of climate change** – Populations worldwide are already feeling the health impacts of climate change, so we must double down on adaptation. We are helping people adapt through innovating our products and helping consumers change their lifestyles to address the health threats posed by climate change.

Our purpose-led brands support disease prevention, while our partnerships and programmes are improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene for the communities we serve.

Through the **Climate and Health Coalition**, we are helping provide guidance for businesses on how to simultaneously drive progress on climate and health.



## ANTICIPATING

**Anticipating future health threats** – We are **conducting and funding cutting edge research** to anticipate future health threats, driving health innovations, and **convening a coalition of climate and health experts to accelerate change**. We are easing the burdens on health systems by **addressing four of the world's largest health problems**<sup>2</sup>, empowering people to engage in self-care, and encouraging positive consumer behaviour change.



<sup>2</sup>Reckitt (2021). Addressing Four of the World's Largest Problems. Retrieved from: <https://www.reckitt.com/media/10024/worlds-largest-problems.pdf>

# HOW CAN RECKITT WORK WITH OUR PARTNERS TO PROTECT PEOPLE'S HEALTH?

We recognise that we are still on our own sustainability journey, and that our work is only a small part of the wider fight against climate change. If we are to deliver our purpose and enable a cleaner, healthier world, we will need to work through partnerships to amplify our efforts.

We're doing this in a number of ways, working with others to drive health and climate progress through:

- Mainstreaming health into international climate change and biodiversity agendas, building towards holistic solutions for health at health day at COP28.
- Government collaboration with the private sector to enable self-care behaviours to strengthen people's health, hygiene and nutrition and reduce the burden on health services, for example, by:
  - Increasing access to and uptake of individual self-protection and risk reduction measures<sup>3</sup>.
  - Considering the balance between improved access and public health considerations of over-the-counter medicines from a regulatory perspective.
  - Embracing responsible technological developments in delivering personalised healthcare.
  - Engaging in self-care programmes to empower chronic patients to manage elements of their own care<sup>4</sup>.
  - Conducting public health campaigns to raise awareness on health and climate change, utilising collaboration with private brands to deliver impactful initiatives with scale<sup>5</sup>.

Everyone's health depends on a healthier planet. At Reckitt, we want to play our part in delivering a healthier, cleaner and climate resilient world. If, as a society, we rise to this challenge, we will have healthier populations, reduced healthcare and societal inequalities, and health systems that are climate and nature positive. This will help build happier societies, while protecting the natural world on which we rely. This is the vision that Reckitt wants to work towards.

To read our report in full, [click here](#).

## CONTACTS



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<sup>3</sup>LSHTM (2021). The Impact of Climate Change on Health: Reducing Risks and Increasing Resilience in the Era of Covid-19 [C. Machalaba and T. Bouley, K. Rose Nunziata, A. Anyamba, O. Dar, A. Hurtado Epstein, W. Karesh, K. Martin, L. Smeeth, F. Vial, C. Wannous, and D. Croft, P. Edwards, and P. O'Hayer]. Retrieved from: [https://www.reckitt.com/media/9552/the-impact-of-climate-change-on-health\\_final.pdf](https://www.reckitt.com/media/9552/the-impact-of-climate-change-on-health_final.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>The Economist Intelligence Unit (2019). Enabling People to Manage their Health and Wellbeing: Policy Approaches to Self-Care. Retrieved from: [https://www.reckitt.com/infographic-assets/SummaryReport2019/assets/pdf/RB\\_Self\\_Care\\_Report\\_Web.pdf](https://www.reckitt.com/infographic-assets/SummaryReport2019/assets/pdf/RB_Self_Care_Report_Web.pdf)

<sup>5</sup>World Health Organization (2021). 2021 WHO Health and Climate Change Survey Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240038509>