Hotter summers, longer pollen seasons, and record rainfalls...

These changing patterns are putting our health, and the health of those we love, at risk.

So, communities around the country are taking steps to prepare.

State, local, and tribal health officials are using the Building Resilience Against Climate Effects framework, called BRACE for short, the five-step process is used to develop strategies and programs that help communities prepare a coordinated community response to the health effects of climate change.

Step 1 is identifying what climate effects are relevant locally. How those might lead to new or expanded health threats, and who is most at risk.

The next step is to calculate the expected impacts on the local population,
and rank the severity of each threat.

This is called “projecting the disease burden.”

What it does is it helps health officials tackle the worst risks first.

Step 3 is to identify ways the community can intervene to prevent or reduce health effects.

For example, health officials who are expecting more high heat days might consider if it would be more effective to open community cooling centers, or to collaborate on housing and development plans to protect vulnerable residents.

Then in Step 4, health officials work with other community sectors to develop and implement their plan.

For example,

health officials may work with city planners to reduce the impacts of urban heat islands, or with broadcast meteorologists to alert people to prepare for extreme weather.

Step 5 is evaluation.

Health officials assess the success of their adaptation plans
and gather lessons learned to apply for future activities.

The five steps in the BRACE framework are designed to be flexible and responsive to local needs.

Any community whether urban, suburban, rural, or tribal can use BRACE to prepare for the local health impacts of climate change.