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March 4,
2016

 [Margret Aldrich](#)

500,000 deaths by 2050: Climate change shrinks access to healthy food



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Climate change may kill more than 500,000 people by 2050, as populations around the world lose access to nutritious foods, finds a grim new [study](#).

The report, published in [The Lancet](#), finds that global warming will not only reduce the overall food supply – it will also influence the composition of the human diet.

Researchers predict the world's food supply will drop by 3.2 percent in 2050, compared to a scenario without global warming. As a result, people will eat 4 percent fewer fruits and vegetables and 0.7 percent less meat.

According to the study, these deceptively small dietary changes will result in about 529,000 preventable deaths worldwide. While some will occur due to people being underweight, the majority will be caused by nutritional changes to the human diet, the researchers say.

“It’s not just about getting enough calories,” Richard Choularton, of the [United Nations World Food Program](#), who was not involved in the study, [told Time](#). “Calories aren’t good enough without micronutrients. Cognitive and physical development depend on eating the right things.”

Deaths caused by eating fewer fruits and vegetables were most prevalent in high-income countries, in addition to low- or middle-income countries in the Western Pacific, Europe and Eastern Mediterranean, the model showed. Overall, the most climate-related deaths were seen in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia, while deaths due to insufficient calorie intake hit Africa and Southeast Asia hardest.

Earlier this year, secretary of state [Madeleine Albright](#) named food security “a moral and political issue.” The researchers agree, calling on

policyholders to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, modify public health programs and address the issue of [food waste](#).

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