

# Green Health Forecasts

Green Health will continue to evolve over the next decade. As health and sustainability converge, we'll need to turn our attention to what's changing. Below are IFTF's forecasts for the future of Green Health as seen through the following lenses.

**CAUSALITY:** Explanations for illness and well-being will include the environment. More people will view health, and risks to well-being, in the context of the environment itself—whether that is the natural environment and climate change or the built environment and lifestyles. The current focus on the health impacts of climate change and disease burden is heightening public awareness of science and health research around multi-causal and ecological explanations of disease. Expanding awareness of the connections of health to the environment will reveal more complex and ecological conceptions of causality.

**INTERVENTIONS:** Therapeutic and preventative health interventions aren't focused only on our bodies, but also on the environments in which we live. Interventions will reflect ecological causality and be expressed in policies and practices, scaling from the local to global. Health interventions that focus on just changing individual behavior without making changes in the environment will seem inadequate. For example, together, behavior modification and making changes in food webs will be important for preventing the anticipated global disease burden of diabetes in the next decade and beyond.

**BODIES:** We are becoming aware of the effects of places and the ways we move through them on levels of physical, emotional, and spiritual selves, and in connection to planetary and collective well-being. This expanded sense of self will shape our identities and our affinities with others, as well as our responses to both individual and collective risks. Research and interventions around asthma and cardiovascular disease, for example, already reflect this connection between our bodies and the environment and locate risk in the places we live and the pollution we breathe. The ramifications of these expanded understandings will drive us to protect ourselves and become civically engaged.

**RISK:** Different forms of risk continue to emerge, while old risks take on new significance. From financial risks of disease burden to the safety, sustainability, and resilience of food supplies, a need to understand the interrelationship between forms of risk and risk management emerges. Biocitizens embody aggregated risks and have the potential to drive change by highlighting gaps and demanding responses from the institutions people expect to protect them. Expect more forms of biocitizenship to emerge demanding rights to the things that produce good health, including clean air, safe neighborhoods, clean transit, community gardens, and nutritious food.

**HEALTH:** Personal health will be tied to environmental well-being, as people expand their individual sustainability values to multiple domains, protecting the body, home, community, and planet. This will change the role of place in people's health ecologies, expanding the scope of what kinds of places matter. We will see more differentiation in practices and strategies in everyday life and organizational practice as people incorporate sustainability into their lives. People will develop novel practices for navigating and avoiding risk in place, as well as demand new tools to assess risk in places that would otherwise remain invisible.

**PLACE AND SPACE:** Place matters on multiple dimensions, giving rise to more experimentation and new ways of understanding the interactions between space and health. Where we live, work, and play will generate a context for the risks that people experience, and the possibilities of what good health can mean. Expect Green Health to get mapped at different scales—in the home, community, region—as awareness expands, and the health attributes of place become ever more important. For example, the greening of public spaces and workplaces will create demands on other contexts in which we live out our lives, focusing attention on the link between personal health and the environment unlike ever before.

# How To Read This Map

This map tracks the past, present, and future of Green Health from 1800 to 2020 in the form of a loose historical timeline. Think of it as a framework or toolkit for guiding your organization through Green Health.

We have highlighted seven key stories, which we call **ROOTS**, from which Green Health emerges today. These stories are spread out across the map in a framework of **Experienced Reality, Historical Catalysts, and Institutional Change**. Some of these stories are not considered mainstream today, but they had deep and layered impacts in the past and are re-emerging in the present

All of the stories are supported by **SIGNALS**—events, turning points, or data points that illustrate their historical context

The last two decades of this timeline contain a set of **DRIVERS** that are shaping the forecasts of Green Health: **Policies, Climate Change, Disease Burden, Resource Constraints, and Rethinking Value & Values**

To highlight the most interesting stories in both the genealogy of Green Health and our forecasts of its future, we have looked at the past through six **LENSES**, which reveal patterns that we call **CONVERGENCES**

**CAUSALITY:** the systems of explanation surrounding of illness, infirmity, health, and well-being

**INTERVENTIONS:** the practices and polices at different scales for affecting changes in health

**Eco-etiology**—the ways in which health and illness are explained in terms of actual and metaphorical ecologies

**BODIES:** the interconnected physical, emotional, and spiritual self

**RISK:** perceived or experienced dangers or susceptibilities

**Biocitizens**—collectives of peers empowered to perceive and protect from risk of and to the body

**HEALTH:** "[a] state of complete mental, physical and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (Source: World Health Organization)

**PLACE AND SPACE:** the contexts and settings where we live work and play

**Health Commons**—alliances of stakeholders and resources contributing to health, organized around place, community, or common cause

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# GREEN HEALTH

## connecting the natural, the ecological & the healthy

Health and the environment have been at the forefront of social consciousness in recent years, and Institute for the Future (IFTF) research has shown that individuals are linking their personal health to the environment, ecology, and sustainability. We call this movement "Green Health" and we believe it will define the next chapter of the global health economy.

In order to look ahead, we need to understand that the roots of Green Health—everything from the London cholera outbreaks of 1854, to Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* in 1962, to the rise of the hybrid vehicle in the early 2000s—are important to the past, present, and future story of Green Health. *The Genealogy of Green Health Map* focuses our attention on the cultural and historical roots of Green Health. This map tells a story that unfolds over 200 years, where the convergence between "green"—naturalism and environmentalism—and "health" is the focus. It tracks the changing paradigms for protecting and nurturing health, through the lenses of causality, intervention, risk, place, and bodies over time. Moving from 1800 to 2020 we pull out, from the complexity of history, seven key stories, supported by key examples of their historical context, from which Green Health emerges today.

The convergence between health and sustainability plays out in many different ways. Scientifically, Green Health embodies the epidemiological interaction connecting human health and the environment. Culturally, it represents the understanding of nature as a powerful connecting force between people, their health, and the world in which they live. Socially, Green Health illustrates a nexus of morally laden decisions about living in the world as a patient, worker, consumer, and citizen. Our forecast of the future of Green Health depicts the myriad of connections that have been made, and that will continue to change our views of health and the environment.

The emerging story of Green Health renews old stories and practices, and gives them new meaning in the present. *The Genealogy of Green Health Map* highlights this evolution and provides a guide for exploring the possibilities of the future. Use this map to guide your own explorations of Green Health and think through how to respond to the new market needs, new value propositions, and new innovation spaces that will open up as this important story continues to unfold over the next decade.

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