

# **Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI)**

## **About**

The Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI) uses temperature and precipitation data to estimate the relative dryness of a region. Its scale ranges from -10 (very dry) to +10 (very wet) with 0 being normal. A value for moderate drought is -2 while conditions of extreme drought start at -4. The PDSI is best used to quantify long-term drought that has affected a region for several months.

## **About the Measures**

The LDH Health Data Portal contains information on the following climate change measures:

- Monthly Palmer Drought Severity Index by climate division

## **About the Data**

The monthly PDSI by climate region was obtained from NOAA's National Climatic Data Center (NCDC).

## **Disclaimer**

Data are intended to spur further research and should be used only as a starting point to understanding how the environment and other contributing factors may be connected to disease. Datasets presented on this site are intended to answer some basic questions, but should ultimately lead to further inquiry and more detailed study.

Data limitations should be noted if conducting exploratory ecological studies with these data. Limitations may include data gaps, reporting discrepancies (for example, a disruption of reporting or instrument recording following hurricanes) and insufficient data on all potentially confounding factors. There are numerous additional factors which may contribute to disease onset. These include genetics, access to health care, existing health conditions, medicines, other chemical substances we come into contact with or ingest, nutrition, route and duration of exposure, level of activity, level of stress, and many others.

Responsible use of this data therefore requires exercising caution when drawing conclusions based solely on views of the limited available data. Any perceived relationship, trend, or pattern apparent in the data should not be interpreted to imply causation; may in fact be unrelated; and should be regarded as preliminary, and potentially erroneous, until more in-depth study and if applicable, statistical evaluation, can be applied. The LDH Bureau of Health Informatics and Environmental Public Health Tracking Program cannot guarantee the completeness of the information contained in these datasets and expressly disclaim liability for errors and omissions in their content.

## **Data Sources**

[Historical Palmer Drought Indices](#)

## **Additional Information**

- [National Center for Atmospheric Research](#)
- [NOAA's Climate Prediction Center](#)

## **Questions**

- Email: [healthdata@la.gov](mailto:healthdata@la.gov)