



Flood Water-Borne Illnesses

What are some common water-borne diseases related to flood water?

Floods can potentially increase the transmission of communicable diseases such as typhoid fever, cholera, leptospirosis, and hepatitis A. Tetanus is not common after injury from flooding, but prevention of tetanus with a recent tetanus vaccination is important during cleanup and debris removal.

What are the symptoms of water-borne diseases?

The following are common symptoms individuals may have once exposed to a water-borne disease: headache, chills, high fever, muscle cramps or pain, cough, bruising, severe diarrhea and vomiting, delirium, rash, dehydration, yellowing of the skin or eyes, anorexia, abdominal discomfort, clay-colored stools, and dark urine.

How are water-borne illness transmitted?

They can be contracted through drinking contaminated water. It can also be transmitted through contact of the skin and mucous membrane with water, damp soil or vegetation, or mud contaminated with rodent urine. People should avoid floodwaters if possible. The water may be contaminated by gas, oil, raw sewage or debris.

How can I protect myself, my family, and others from getting sick?

- Safe water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene include bottled, boiled, or treated water.
- Boiling water is the preferred way to kill harmful bacteria and parasites. Bringing water to a rolling boil for one minute to kill most organisms.
- Throw away food that may have come in contact with flood water.

- Throw away food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.
- Throw away perishable foods (including meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers) that have been at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Throw away canned foods that are bulging, opened, or damaged.
- Food containers with screw caps, snap lids, crimped caps (such as a pop bottle), twist caps, a flip top, snap-open, and home-canned foods should be discarded if they have come in contact with floodwater, because they can't be disinfected.
- If cans have come in contact with floodwater, remove the labels, wash them, dip them in a solution of one cup of bleach in five gallons of water. Re-label the cans with a marker.
- Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare foods, wash your hands, make ice, or make baby formula.

How to feed infants and young children

- Breast-fed infants should continue breastfeeding. For formula-fed infants, use ready-to-feed formula if possible. If using ready-to-feed formula is not possible, it is best to use bottled water to prepare powdered or concentrated formula. If bottled water is not available, use boiled water.
- If you prepare formula with boiled water, let the formula cool sufficiently before giving to an infant.
 - Clean feeding bottles and nipples with bottled, boiled, or treated water before each use.
 - Wash your hands before preparing formula and before feeding an infant. You can use alcohol-based hand sanitizer for washing your hands if the water supply is limited.

For more information:

Sedgwick County Health Department
660-7300 or
www.sedgwickcounty.org



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