

Do you have a weak immune system, trouble with breathing, or care for someone who does? Consider these tips after a flood!

After a flood, adults and children with cancer, asthma, COPD, diabetes, AIDS, and other health conditions may be at increased risk for infection and trouble breathing. Use these tips to keep yourself and your loved ones safe.



Call your health care providers

- Let them know if you are no longer in your home or cannot get yourself or your loved one to treatment. They can help find care close to you or arrange transportation.
- Ask if you or your loved one need shots for hepatitis A or B, flu, pneumonia, or tetanus.
- Take time for your emotional health. Ask for help if you or your child feel overwhelmed with emotions. Talk with your health care provider, counselor, or pastor.



If staying in a shelter

- You and your child should wear a mask.
- Stay at least six feet away from others.
- Ask staff for help to call healthcare providers.
- Ask staff to store your medicines in a safe place.



Check your medicines

- Throw out medicines that may have touched flood water. For hazardous medicines, like chemotherapy drugs, put them in a container and give it to a health care provider to throw out.
- If you lost power and had medicines in your refrigerator, ask a pharmacist if they need to be thrown out.
- If your power will be out for a more than 24 hours, keep refrigerated medicine in a cooler with clean ice.
- If you need to mix water with your medicine, make sure it is clean.
- Tell your health care provider if you've run out of any medicines or supplies.



Go to the emergency room if you or a loved one has

- Fever, chills, or sweats.
- Bleeding that will not stop.
- Pain that is new or worse.
- Headache, stiff neck, or sore throat.
- Shortness of breath or cough.
- Burning or pain when you use the bathroom.
- Bloody or cloudy urine.
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Redness, swelling, drainage, tenderness, or warmth anywhere on the body.



Check food

- If you lost power for more than 24 hours, do not eat food in the refrigerator or freezer.
- Do not eat anything that looks, smells, or feels bad.
- Do not eat food from gardens that have flooded.
- Throw out any food that has been in flood water. This includes cardboard boxes, containers with caps or flip tops, and home canning.
- Throw out any containers that are bulging, open, or damaged.
- When in doubt, throw it out!



Stay away from mold

- Mold grows in wet areas, and you may not see it. Avoid places where mold is growing.
- Ask for help if you need to clean mold out of your home.
- If you must be in a place where mold is growing, wear an N-95 mask, gloves, long sleeves, pants, and goggles. Wear rubber boots and gloves if you must walk through flood water.
- Bathe and change your clothes after being around mold.



Check water

- Check local news to see if your water is safe.
- Do not use unsafe water for drinking, cooking, bathing, brushing teeth, mixing with baby formula, or washing hands.
- If there is no safe water, drink bottled water.
- Test well water before using.
- Do not bathe or play in rivers, streams, and lakes after floods.



Clean and sanitize dishes and countertops after a flood

- Wash with hot, soapy water.
- Rinse with clean water.
- Sanitize. Mix 1 cup of bleach in 5 gallons of clean water. Soak items for 1 minute. Use a clean cloth soaked in the solution to wipe countertops. Air dry.



Protect against infection

- Wash hands with soap and clean water often or use hand sanitizer.
- Wear a mask around others and stay away from people who are sick.
- If you or your loved one gets cut or scratched, clean your skin with soap and water. Cover it and keep dry until it heals.
- Do not share toothbrushes or eating utensils with others.
- To stop mosquito bites, use insect spray and wear long sleeves and pants.

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