



Flood Waters or Standing Waters

Health Risks

Flood waters and standing waters pose various risks, including infectious diseases, chemical hazards, and injuries.

Infectious Diseases

- For more detailed information, see CDC's [Infectious Disease After a Disaster](http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/disease/infectious.asp) (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/disease/infectious.asp>) page

Diarrheal Diseases

Eating or drinking anything contaminated by flood water can cause diarrheal disease. To protect yourself and your family,

- Practice good hygiene ([handwashing](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/hygiene/index.html#handwashing) (<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/hygiene/index.html#handwashing>)) after contact with flood waters.
- Do not allow children to play in flood water areas.
- Wash children's hands frequently (always before meals).
- Do not allow children to play with toys that have been contaminated by flood water and have not been disinfected.

For information on disinfecting certain nonporous toys, visit CDC Healthy Water's [Cleaning and Sanitizing with Bleach](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/cleaning/index.html#bleach) (<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/cleaning/index.html#bleach>) section.

Wound Infections

Open wounds and rashes exposed to flood waters can become infected. To protect yourself and your family,

- Avoid exposure to flood waters if you have an open wound.
- Cover open wounds with a waterproof bandage.
- Keep open wounds as clean as possible by washing well with soap and clean water.
- If a wound develops redness, swelling, or drainage, seek immediate medical attention.

For more information, visit

- [Emergency Wound Care After a Natural Disaster](http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/woundcare.asp) (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/woundcare.asp>)
- [Emergency Wound Management for Healthcare Professionals](http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/emergwoundhcp.asp) (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/emergwoundhcp.asp>)

- Management of *Vibrio vulnificus* Wound Infections After a Disaster
(<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/disease/vibriofaq.asp>)
- *Vibrio vulnificus* After a Disaster
(<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/vibriovulnificus.asp>)

Chemical Hazards

Be aware of potential chemical hazards during floods. Flood waters may have moved hazardous chemical containers of solvents or other industrial chemicals from their normal storage places.

- Protect Yourself from Chemicals Released During a Natural Disaster
(<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/chemicals.asp>) (CDC)
- Chemical Emergencies (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/chemical/>) (CDC)

Injuries


Drowning

Flood water poses drowning risks for everyone, regardless of their ability to swim. Swiftly moving shallow water can be deadly, and even shallow standing water can be dangerous for small children.

Vehicles do not provide adequate protection from flood waters. They can be swept away or may stall in moving water.

Animal and Insect Bites

Flood waters can displace animals, insects, and reptiles. To protect yourself and your family, be alert and avoid contact.

- Protect Yourself from Animal- and Insect-Related Hazards After A Disaster
(<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/animalhazards/>) (CDC)
- Wildlife in Disasters (<http://www.fema.gov/rebuild/recover/wildlife.shtm>)  (<http://www.cdc.gov/Other/disclaimer.html>) (Federal Emergency Management Agency - FEMA)

Electrical Hazards

Avoid downed power lines.

- Protect Yourself and Others From Electrical Hazards After a Disaster
(<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/electrical.asp>) (CDC)

Wounds


Flood waters may contain sharp objects, such as glass or metal fragments, that can cause injury and lead to infection.

- Emergency Wound Care After a Natural Disaster
(<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/woundcare.asp>) (CDC).

Cleanup of Flood Water

When returning to your home after a flooding emergency, be aware that flood water may contain sewage. For more information on how to protect yourself and your family, visit CDC's Cleanup of Flood Water (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/cleanupwater.asp>).

Resources and Guidance

- After a Flood (CDC (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/after.asp>), FEMA (http://www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/fl_after.shtm)  (<http://www.cdc.gov/Other/disclaimer.html>))
- Prevent Illness and Injuries After Flooding (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/illnessinjury.asp>) (CDC)

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 1600 Clifton Rd. Atlanta, GA 30333, USA
800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) TTY: (888) 232-6348 - Contact CDC-INFO