

**Flooding Health & Safety Tips**  
**Watertown Department of Public Health**  
**920-262-8090**

**Water Safety**

- When in doubt about your drinking water or if your drinking water is CLOUDY, ODOROUS, COLORED – **DO NOT DRINK THE WATER!** Also, do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food or to make ice.
- People with city or village water can get water quality results from their local water department. If you have a well, water test kits can be obtained from the health department (for families with small children and pregnant women) and the UW-Extension. You can also call a well digging company about how to get water tested.
- The currents in flooded waterways can be unpredictable due to the large amount of water. People should keep themselves and their children out of fast moving water; it is easy to end up in the water and be swept downstream.
- **Assume all flood water is contaminated and KEEP CHILDREN AND ANIMALS OUT OF THE WATER. Do not swim or bathe in rivers, streams, creeks or lakes in flooded areas!**

**Food Safety**

- When in doubt, do not eat suspicious food.
- Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with flood water.
- For infants, until you are sure of your water quality, use only canned formula that requires no added water.
- If your refrigerator or freezer has been without power for a period of time, all stored items should be checked carefully. Perishable food at room temperature for more than 2 hours should be discarded. Frozen food that has thawed should be discarded if not consumed immediately.

**Garbage Precautions**

- Place household garbage including food waste in water proof containers. Garbage cans attract animals and disease-bearing insects. If possible, store in a rigid container.

**Injury Prevention**

*Electrical Safety*

- Do not attempt to restore or work on power sources without first contacting your utility. Avoid all downed power lines, especially those in water.
- Emergency generators must be used in well ventilated areas

*Physical Hazards*

- Avoid wading in water without proper foot protection. Broken glass, metal fragments, and other debris may be submerged in the flooded area.
- Wear proper eyewear, gloves and other protective equipment when cleaning up an area.

- Boats should be used with caution. Submerged items such as signs, fences, etc. may not be visible and can result in serious injury.
- Make sure your tetanus shot is up to date before starting clean up activities. If you need an update, call your health care provider or local health department.

### ***Insects***

- Wear DEET containing (unless instructed otherwise by your health care provider) insect repellent when out of doors performing clean up activities and as regular habit. Mosquitoes and other insects may transmit disease. Check with your health care provider before using DEET products on infants and children.
- Remove any standing water from places such as boats, tires, wading pools, ditches, buckets, cans or building materials. Keep tarps and pool covers tight to prevent the accumulation of water.

### ***Animals***

- Beware of wild animals such as raccoons and skunks that may have been flooded out of their burrow.
- Also, avoid cats and dogs you don't know. If bitten by any animal, contact your physician, the local police or sheriff's department or the local health department as soon as possible.
- Animals may have sheltered in vacant homes, garages, or other buildings. Carefully inspect your buildings before reoccupying.

### ***Wounds***

- If you are injured while performing clean up activities, contact your health care provider for treatment as soon as possible. Injuries such as cuts, lacerations or puncture wounds will need treatment and you may need a tetanus vaccination. Your health care provider can also instruct you in the signs and symptoms of infection you need to be on the look out for.

If you have any questions regarding health and safety tips with flooding, you can call your local health department at (920) 262-8090 or your local emergency government director.