

CDC Flood Recovery



FLOODS

FACT SHEET

Key Facts About Flood Recovery

CDC offers these essential tips to help you recover from a flood.

How to Avoid Illness

Always wash your hands with soap and water that has been boiled or disinfected before preparing or eating food, after toilet use, after participating in flood cleanup activities, and after handling articles contaminated with flood water or sewage. If you receive a puncture wound or a wound contaminated with feces, soil, or saliva, have a doctor or health department determine whether a tetanus booster is necessary.

How to Make Sure Your Food Is Safe

Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with flood water. For infants, use only pre-prepared canned baby formula that requires no added water, rather than powdered formulas prepared with treated water. Thawed food can usually be eaten or refrozen if it is still "refrigerator cold," or if it still contains ice crystals. To be safe, remember, "When in doubt, throw it out." Discard any refrigerated or frozen food that has been at room temperature for two hours or more, and any food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.

How to Make Sure Your Water Is Safe

Listen for public announcements on the safety of the municipal water supply. Flooded, private water wells will need to be tested and disinfected after flood waters recede. Questions about testing should be directed to your local or state health departments.

Safe water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene includes bottled, boiled, or treated water. Your state or local health department can make specific recommendations for boiling or treating water in your area. Here are some general rules concerning water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene. Remember:

- Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, make ice, or make baby formula. If possible, use baby formula that does not need to have water added. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to wash your hands.
- If you use bottled water, be sure it came from a safe source. If you do not know that the water came from a safe source, you should boil or treat it before you use it. Use only bottled, boiled, or treated water until your supply is tested and found safe.
- Boiling water, when practical, is the preferred way to kill harmful bacteria and parasites. Bringing water to a rolling boil for 1 minute will kill most organisms.
- When boiling water is not practical, you can treat water with chlorine tablets, iodine tablets, or unscented household chlorine bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite):
 - If you use chlorine tablets or iodine tablets, follow the directions that come with the tablets.

September 10, 2004

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