

# FLOODWATER SAFETY

## AFTER A DISASTER OR EMERGENCY



Floodwaters and standing waters can be dangerous and can make you vulnerable to infectious diseases, chemical hazards, and injuries. Floodwaters can contain many things that may harm health, such as downed power lines, chemicals, and more.

### Protect Yourself & Loved Ones

It is important to protect yourself and loved ones from the risks brought by floodwater. **The best way to protect yourself is to stay out of the water!**

#### STAY OUT OF FLOODWATER



- Avoid contact with floodwater and do not swim in floodwater.
- Avoid eating and drinking anything contaminated by floodwater.
- Be alert and avoid contact with displaced animals, insects and reptiles.
- Be aware of objects that can cause injury, such as glass, metal fragments, lumber, vehicles and debris.

#### DO NOT DRIVE IN FLOODED AREAS



- Do not drive or walk in flooded areas.
- Be aware cars and other vehicles can be swept away or may stall in moving water.
- Stay informed and follow warnings about flooded roads.

#### AVOID HAZARDS



- Avoid fallen power lines – call the power company to report fallen power lines.
- Be aware of possible chemicals in floodwater.
- Shut off electrical power and natural gas or propane tanks in your home to avoid fire, electrocution, or explosions.

### If You Come in Contact with Floodwater

- 1** Wash the area with soap & clean water as soon as possible. *If you don't have soap or water, use alcohol-based wipes or sanitizer.*
- 2** Clean & take care of wounds & seek medical attention if necessary.
- 3** Wash clothes contaminated with flood or sewage water in hot water & detergent before reusing them.



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### Prevent Infection of Open Wounds & Rashes



Open wounds and rashes exposed to floodwater can become infected. Naturally occurring bacteria can live in certain waters and cause skin infections when an open wound is exposed to them.

- ✓ Avoid exposure to floodwater if you have an open wound
- ✓ Cover clean, open wounds with a waterproof bandage to reduce chance of infection
- ✓ Keep open wounds as clean as possible by washing them with soap & clean water
- ✓ Seek immediate medical attention if a wound develops redness, swelling or oozing, or if there is a foreign object imbedded in the wound


### Seek medical attention as soon as possible if:

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- ▶ There is a foreign object (soil, wood, metal, or other objects) embedded in the wound
  - ▶ The wound is at special risk of infection (from a dog bite or a puncture by a dirty object)
  - ▶ An old wound shows signs of becoming infected - increased pain and soreness, swelling, redness, draining or you develop a fever

### Prevent Diarrheal Diseases

Be aware that floodwater may contain sewage, and eating or drinking anything contaminated by floodwater can cause diarrheal diseases (such as *E. Coli* or *Salmonella* infection).

### Protect yourself and your family

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- ✓ Wash your hands after contact with floodwater. Be sure to wash children's hands with soap & water often & always before meals.
  - ✓ Do not allow children to play or swim in floodwater areas.
  - ✓ Do not allow children to play with toys that have been contaminated by floodwater & have not been disinfected.
  - ✓ Do not bathe in floodwater, including rivers, streams, or lakes that may be contaminated with sewage or toxic chemicals.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

