



CHCHD News

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department

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Health Department Offers Recommendations for Flood Clean Up

Chattanooga, TN- Continued heavy rains have caused significant flooding in Hamilton County. In response to health and safety concerns that may emerge, the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department is offering recommendations for affected residents.

“During a flood and its aftermath, it’s important that residents know how to protect their personal health and safety,” says Becky Barnes, Health Department Administrator. She continues, “It is especially important for people to practice basic hygiene and be on guard for possible food and water contamination, since floodwaters may pose significant health risks.”

In response to the current flood situation in Hamilton County, the Health Department is offering the following recommendations:

Health and Safety

- Always wash hands with soap and clean water after coming in contact with floodwater.
- Waterproof gloves and boots are recommended during cleanup.
- Food that has been contaminated by floodwater is not safe for consumption.
- Discard any perishable food item that has been at room temperature for more than two hours. When in doubt, throw it out.
- Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush teeth, wash or prepare food, or prepare baby formula.
- Wash contaminated linens in hot water.

Mosquitoes

- Drain standing water left in containers around buildings.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants when outside.
- Use an insect repellent containing DEET.

General

- Do not allow children to play in or near floodwater or storm drains.
- Disinfect all furniture, woodwork and other household surfaces in homes that have flooded.

- To prevent allergic reactions and other health problems caused by mold, replace porous wallboard (from at least 12 inches above the waterline) that has been flood-damaged.
- Disinfect children's toys and outdoor furniture with a solution of one cup bleach to five gallons of water.
- To prevent producing toxic fumes, do not mix bleach with products that contain ammonia.

Residents can be at risk of tetanus infection as a result of contact with contaminated water due to heavy flooding. If a person is exposed to floodwater and has not had a Tetanus booster in 10 or more years, then a booster dose is indicated. If a person has open or contaminated wounds while exposed to floodwater and has not had a Tetanus booster in 5 or more years, then a booster dose is indicated. Tetanus vaccinations are available at all Health Department locations.

To learn more about the risks associated with floods or how to clean up after a flood, visit <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/flood> or call the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department's Environmental Services Department at 209-8110.

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