

Disaster

Preventing Illness and Disease After a Disaster

Wildlife and Pets



- Avoid wild or stray animals and biting or stinging insects.
- Call local authorities to handle animals.
- Handle dead animals according to recommendations, as soon as possible.
- If bitten by any animal, seek immediate medical attention. If bitten by a snake, try to identify it, so that if it is poisonous, the correct anti-venom can be given. Do not cut the wound or attempt to suck the venom out.

For more information, contact local animal shelter or services, a veterinarian, or the Humane Society for advice on dealing with pets or stray or wild animals after an emergency.

How to Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if breathed in.

- Never use generators, pressure washers, grills, camp stoves or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside the home, basement, garage, or camper, or even outside near an open window, door, or vent.
- Do not heat house with a gas oven.
- If CO detector sounds, take family members and pets and leave home immediately.
- If suspected CO poisoning, is suspected, feeling dizzy, light-headed, or nauseated, Seek prompt medical attention.

Keep Foods Ice, and Drinking Water Safe

- Food may not be safe to eat during and after an emergency and water may not be safe for cooking.
- During and after a disaster, water can become contaminated with disease causing microorganisms, from sewage, agricultural or industrial waste, chemicals, run-off water and other substances that can cause injury or death.
- Listen to and follow public announcements. Local authorities will inform the public if water is safe to drink or to use for cooking or bathing. Follow local instructions to use bottled water or to boil or disinfect water for cooking, cleaning, or bathing.

Washing Hands Properly



Always wash hands with soap and boiled or disinfected water before preparing or eating food, after toilet use, after participating in cleanup activities, and after handling articles contaminated by floodwater or sewage. Use warm water when available. It is important to wash children's hands frequently (always before meals). Baby wipes are handy products to keep available for cleanup.

Disinfect water for washing by mixing 1/8 teaspoon of household bleach per 1 gallon of water). Let it stand for 30 minutes. If the water is cloudy, use a solution of 1/4 teaspoon of household bleach per 1 gallon of water. If water isn't available, use alcohol-based products made for washing hands.

Protect Mental Health

The days and weeks after an emergency are going to be rough. Some sleeplessness, anxiety, anger, hyperactivity, mild depression, or lethargy are normal and may go away with time. If these feelings persist, seek counseling.

- Keep as many elements of normal routine incorporated into daily plans as possible, including activities to help calm children's fears.
- Turn to family, friends, and important social or religious contacts to setup support networks to deal with the potential stressors. Talk to family physician.
- Let children know that it is okay to feel upset when something bad or scary happens. Encourage children to express feelings and thoughts, without making judgments.



Avoid Mosquitos

Rain and flooding may lead to an increase in mosquitoes, which can carry diseases like West Nile Virus. In most cases, the mosquitoes will be pests but will not carry diseases.

- To protect from mosquitoes, use screens on dwellings, and wear long pants, socks, and long-sleeved shirts and use insect repellents that contain DEET or Picaridin. Care must be taken when using DEET on small children. Follow product instructions.
- To control mosquito populations, drain all standing water left in open containers, such as flower pots, tires, pet dishes, or buckets, outside the home.

Clean Up After Flooding

To help prevent illness, clean and disinfect buildings and the items in them. Use fans and dehumidifiers to hasten drying. This will prevent growth of some bacteria, viruses, mold, and mildew that can cause illness.

Prevent Illness From Sewage

Overflow, runoff and floodwater may contain fecal material from overflowing sewage systems and agricultural and industrial waste. Although skin contact with floodwater does not, by itself, pose a serious health risk unless there is an open wound or cut on the skin, there is risk of disease from eating or drinking anything contaminated with floodwater.

- If there has been a backflow of sewage into house, wear rubber boots and waterproof gloves during cleanup. Remove and discard contaminated household materials that cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected, such as wall coverings, cloth, rugs, and drywall.
- Keep open cuts or sores that may be exposed to water as clean as possible by washing them with soap and applying an antibiotic ointment to discourage infection. Keep them covered.
- Wash clothes and linens contaminated with flood or sewage water in hot water and detergent and separately from uncontaminated clothes and linens.
- Do not allow children to play in floodwater areas and do not allow children to play with floodwater-contaminated toys that have not been cleaned and disinfected. Clean toys with a detergent and disinfect by using a solution of one cup of bleach in five gallons of water. Some toys, such as stuffed animals and baby toys cannot be disinfected, they should be discarded.

Prevent Heat Related Illness

- Stay in air-conditioned buildings or locate a cooling shelter.
- Take frequent breaks in shaded areas or in cool rooms.
- Check on senior relatives, friends and neighbors.
- Drink water and nonalcoholic fluids often, do not wait until you are thirsty.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. Cotton is cooler than synthetic fabrics.
- Do outdoor activities during cooler hours.

Prevent or Treat Wounds



Be sure to immediately clean out all open wounds and cuts with soap and clean water. Keep wounds covered with clean, dry bandages that are large enough to cover the wound and contain any pus or drainage. Change bandages as needed and when drainage can be seen through the bandage. Contact a doctor to find out whether more treatment is needed. If a wound gets red, swells, or drains, seek immediate medical attention.

If skin or eyes may have come in contact with hazardous materials, such as acid from a car battery, wash thoroughly with decontaminated water and seek medical attention as needed.

Wounds should be evaluated for a tetanus immunization. If there is a puncture wound or a wound contaminated with feces, soil, or saliva, have a doctor or The St. Clair County Health Department (810) 987-5300 determine whether a tetanus booster is necessary based on individual records.

For more information on each topic, reference the fact sheet located on the www.scchealth.co website.



For more sources of information on this topic visit:

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT www.scchealth.co

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

www.michigan.gov/mdhhs

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION www.cdc.gov

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF THE CRUELTY OF ANIMALS

www.aspca.org

THE HUMANE SOCIETY www.humanesociety.org

AMERICAN RED CROSS www.redcross.org