



# Clermont County General Health District

## Fact Sheet

2275 Bauer Road Batavia, Ohio 45103 • [www.clermonthealthdistrict.org](http://www.clermonthealthdistrict.org)

### AFTER A FLOOD

**After a flood** do not return to disaster areas until you are authorized to do so. Just because the water is gone doesn't mean the danger is too. A natural disaster can be a very stressful time. Don't forget to take care of yourself mentally and physically.

- Flood dangers do not end when the water begins to recede. Listen to a radio or television and don't return home until authorities indicate it is safe to do so.
- Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance: infants, elderly people and people with disabilities.
- Do not allow children to play in or near floodwater or storm drains.
- Inspect foundations for cracks or other damage.
- Stay out of buildings if flood waters remain around the building.
- When entering buildings, use extreme caution.
  - Wear sturdy shoes and use battery-powered lanterns or flashlights when examining buildings.
  - Examine walls, floors, doors and windows to make sure that the building is not in danger of collapsing.
  - Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes, that may have come into your home with the flood waters. Use a stick to poke through debris.
  - Watch for loose plaster and ceilings that could fall.
- Take pictures of damage to the house and its contents for insurance claims.
- Look for fire hazards:
  - Broken or leaking gas lines
  - Flooded electrical circuits
  - Submerged furnaces or electrical appliances
  - Flammable or explosive materials coming from upstream
- Pump out flooded basements gradually (about one-third of the water per day) to avoid structural damage.
- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits and leaching systems as soon as possible. Damaged sewage systems are health hazards.
- Standing water after floods is a breeding place for mosquitoes. Drain all standing water and empty water from outdoor items such as old tires, cans and flower pot bases. Protect yourself with an appropriate insect repellent containing DEET.
- Disinfect all furniture, woodwork and other household surfaces in homes that have flooded.
- Wash hands frequently during cleanup to lessen recontamination of cleaned areas.
- 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 with a solution of six ounces of bleach to one gallon of water.
- To prevent producing toxic fumes, do not mix bleach with products that contain ammonia.
- To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, do not burn charcoal or use gasoline powered generators or pumps indoors.

**Water:**

- Watch for news media announcements about the safety of public drinking water supplies. Follow “boil water” alerts that may be issued by local water utilities. Do not drink water from unknown sources.
- People under “boil water” alerts and people with private wells that may have been contaminated by floodwater should use only boiled, or treated water until water has been tested and found safe.
- If you boil water for drinking purposes, allow it to boil for at least one minute. Water also may be disinfected with chlorine or iodine (follow package directions) or with ordinary household bleach – one-eighth teaspoon (about eight drops) per gallon of water. Sterilize water containers and drinking vessels with a solution of household bleach.

**Food:**

- Undamaged, commercially canned foods can be saved if you remove the can labels, wash the cans, and then disinfect them with six ounces of bleach to one gallon of water.
- Food containers with screw-caps, snap-lids, twist caps, flip tops, and home canned foods should be discarded if they have come into contact with flood water because they cannot be disinfected.
- If electricity has been off, refrigerated food may have spoiled. Discard any food that has been above 41°F for more than four hours or that has an unusual odor or color. Thawed food from freezers may be safe for consumption or refreezing if it is still partially frozen or is 41°F or below.
- Infants on formula should be given ready to-feed formula or powdered formula prepared with boiled drinking water.
- Wash hands with soap and disinfected water before eating or handling food.

**Medical:**

- People with puncture wounds or cuts exposed to floodwater could be at risk of contracting tetanus and may need to have a tetanus shot to prevent infection.