



State Emergency Operations Center

Joint Information Center

CONTACT: (866) 920-MEMA (6362)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

4 p.m. May 17, 2011

Health Department Advises Residents to Take Precautions After the Flood

The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) continues to monitor the Mississippi River flooding and any health impact it may have on the residents of Mississippi. As the flood waters recede, there are many precautions residents can take to ensure safety in all clean-up efforts.

MSDH recommendations for residents in flood zones:

Personal Protection:

When cleaning up storm-damaged areas, be sure to wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes to prevent cuts and scratches from debris. Do not let children play in floodwater, and discard any items that come into contact with floodwater.

Any food (including food in plastic or glass) medicines, cosmetics or bottled water that has come in contact with floodwater should be discarded. If in doubt, throw it out. Intact cans may be thoroughly disinfected with one-quarter cup of bleach to one gallon of water, and then used.

Around Your Home

When cleaning up debris around your home, be sure ladders are secure before climbing on them to clean the roof and gutters. If you plan to use a chainsaw to clear debris, be sure to operate the machine according to the instructions. If injury occurs, call 9-1-1 or seek immediate medical help.

Flooding can cause mold to grow inside your home, which can cause allergic reactions, asthma episodes, infections, and other respiratory problems. The MSDH does not handle mold removal or abatement. You will need to call a private contractor for further assistance.

Tetanus Information:

Tetanus vaccination is recommended if it's been 10 years or more since your last tetanus vaccination (Tdap is the recommended vaccine). In the event of a puncture wound or wound contaminated with floodwater, individuals should consult a healthcare provider. Tetanus vaccinations are available at all county health departments.

Disinfecting Private Water Wells

Homeowners impacted by the recent flood who do not receive their water supply from a public water system regulated by the MSDH should have their private well inspected, disinfected and sampled in order to protect their health. For step-by-step instructions on disinfecting your private water well, visit the MSDH website at www.HealthyMS.com/flood.

Snakes:

If you come in contact with a snake during cleanup efforts, do not attempt to catch or kill the snake. Slowly back away from the snake. If you are bitten by a snake:

- Do not attempt to cut, suck, or apply ice to the bite area.

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- Do not apply a tourniquet.
- Call 911 immediately. Lay the person flat and keep the bitten part of the body at the level of the rest of the body. Do not elevate or dangle a bitten arm or leg.
- According to the University of Mississippi Medical Center, there is plenty of antivenin available should it be needed.

For more information on flood safety, visit www.HealthyMS.com. Also, look for us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HealthyMS or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/msdh.

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