



State Emergency Operations Center

Joint Information Center

CONTACT: (866) 920-MEMA (6362)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2:30 p.m. June 3, 2011

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Returning Home After the Flood: Important Reminders and Precautions

CLINTON—As the floodwaters along the Mississippi River continue to recede the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and the Mississippi State Department of Health would like to urge residents to use extra caution as cleanup efforts begin.

Personal Protection During Cleanup:

- If in doubt, throw it out. Any food (including food in plastic or glass), medicines, cosmetics or bottled water that has come in contact with floodwater should be discarded. Intact cans may be thoroughly disinfected with one quarter cup of bleach to one gallon of water, and then used.
- When cleaning up storm-damaged areas, be sure to wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes to prevent cuts and scratches from debris.
- When cleaning up debris around your home, be sure ladders are secure before climbing on them to clean the room 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. Neither MEMA nor MSDH handles mold removal or abatement. Contact a private contractor for further assistance.

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 MDSH should have their private well inspected, disinfected and sampled to protect their health.
- For step-by-step instructions on disinfecting your private water well, visit the MSDH website at www.HealthyMS.com/flood.

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Mosquitoes and Insects:

- Once the flood water recedes, remove all sources of standing water in and around your property, including bird baths, wading pools, ceramic pots and other objects that have collected floodwater.
- Avoid flood impacted areas during times when mosquito activity is at its peak. Evenings and mornings have the highest activity.
- Protect yourself with long, light-colored clothing or use insect repellent containing DEET or Picaridin. Strictly follow label directions when applying these products.

Tetanus Information:

- Tetanus vaccination is recommended if it has 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 and are provided at no charge in the following federally declared counties impacted by the flood waters: Adams, Bolivar, Claiborne, Coahoma, Desoto, Humphreys, Issaquena, Jefferson, Sharkey, Tunica, Warren, Washington, Wilkinson and Yazoo.

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Visit MEMA online at www.msema.org. You can also follow us on Twitter and Facebook using the keyword MSEMA.

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.

Note to media: After hours or during emergencies, call 1-866-HLTHY4U (1-866-458-4948)