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HEALTH RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH FLOODING

Use caution in and near flooded areas



Contact:

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Martin County, FL – As a heavy dose of rainstorms continue to blanket our area, the Florida Department of Health in Martin County reminds residents about health risks associated with flood waters.

DOH recommends the following to prevent illness or injury from flood waters:

- Basic hygiene is critical. Wash your hands with soap and water that has been boiled or disinfected before preparing or eating food, after toilet use, after participating in flood cleanup activities, and after handling articles contaminated with flood water or sewage.
- Avoid eating or drinking anything that has been contaminated with flood waters.
- Flood waters may be contaminated with fecal matter, so do not wade through or allow children to play in standing water.
- Be alert to and avoid contact with wildlife, such as snakes, that may have been displaced by the storm.
- Avoid contact with flood waters if you have open cuts or sores. If you have any open cuts or sores and cannot avoid contact with flood waters, keep them as clean as possible by washing well with soap to control infection. If a wound develops redness, swelling, or drainage, seek immediate medical attention.
- If there is a backflow of sewage into your house, wear rubber boots and waterproof gloves during cleanup. Remove and discard absorbent household materials, such as wallcoverings, cloth, rugs, and sheetrock. Clean walls and hard-surfaced floors with soap and water and disinfect with a solution of 1/4 cup of bleach to one gallon of water. Thoroughly disinfect food contact surfaces (counter tops, refrigerators, tables) and areas where small children play. Wash all linens and clothing in hot water. Discard items such as mattresses that cannot be cleaned.

If on a septic system and your plumbing is functioning slowly:

- Conserve water as much as possible; the less water used the less sewage the septic tank must process. Minimize use of your washing machine.

- Do not have the septic tank pumped. Exceptionally high-water tables might crush a septic tank that was pumped dry. If the fundamental problem is high ground water, pumping the tank does nothing to solve that problem.
- To report a drainage issue on Martin County maintained properties, visit: <https://www.martin.fl.us/martin-county-services/report-drainage-complaint>
- For drainage issues on City of Stuart roadways, 772-288-1292.

If your well is flooded:

- Heavy rainfall may have made your well water unsafe to drink. If you are unsure about the impact of flooding on your well water, use bottled water or boil water for drinking, making ice, teeth brushing and washing any areas of the skin that have been cut or injured.
- For tips on how to disinfect a well that has been flooded: [CDC Well Disinfection](#)
- For additional questions, contact DOH-Martin, Environmental Health: 772-221-4090

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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