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FLOOD WATERS POSE HEALTH RISKS

Use caution in and near flooded areas



Contact:

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Martin County, FL – With the potential for heavy rain and flooding, the Florida Department of Health in Martin County (DOH-Martin) urges residents to be aware of the health risks associated with flooding. Skin contact with flood waters does not, by itself, pose a serious health risk. However, health hazards are a concern when waters are or become contaminated with bacteria or contain dangerous debris.

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

- Basic hygiene is critical. Wash your hands with soap and either disinfected or boiled and cooled water, especially before preparing or eating food, after toilet use, after handling a soiled diaper, after participating in flood cleanup activities and after handling objects contaminated with flood water or sewage.
- Use commercially-bottled water for mixing baby formula.
- Avoid eating or drinking anything that has been contaminated with flood waters

Avoid contact with flood waters, especially if you have open cuts or sores.

- If you have any open cuts or sores and come in contact with flood waters, wash the area well with soap to prevent infection. If a wound develops redness, swelling or drainage, seek immediate medical attention.
- Residents who sustain lacerations and/or puncture wounds, are encouraged to contact their primary health care provider to make sure they are current on their tetanus vaccine and possibly get a booster.

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.

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

Martin County Storm Resources:

- Martin County: <https://www.martin.fl.us/Hurricane>
- City of Stuart: <https://cityofstuart.us/>

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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