



Buchanan County
Public Health Department

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Time 1500

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flooding and Disease

People are often concerned about disease during a flood and subsequent clean-up. Enteric disease, or diseases of the gut which cause vomiting and diarrhea, can be avoided by thoroughly washing hands with soap and running water before eating and at the end of the clean-up day. Do not use contaminated water to clean, wash dishes, prepare food, or make ice and throw away any contaminated or potentially contaminated food. Decrease risk of mosquito and other insect bites by wearing long sleeves and pants and using insect repellent.

Tetanus and hepatitis are two vaccines often questioned during this time. Increases in cases of tetanus and hepatitis have not been associated with flooding. However, floods serve as a good reminder to check your immunization record. Tetanus and hepatitis immunizations are routinely recommended for children and adults.

Tetanus

People are at risk for tetanus infection when they are injured and have wounds that are contaminated by the environment. Flooding is not shown to increase the risk for tetanus disease. However, cleaning up after a flood may increase the risk of getting a wound. Any time you receive a wound, ask your healthcare provider if you need a tetanus-containing vaccine to protect you from disease.

- Adults should receive a booster dose of tetanus, diphtheria-containing vaccine every 10 years. An injury prior to the 10 years may warrant a booster dose sooner.
- Children need a series of vaccine between 2 and 18 months of age, as well as booster doses at 4 to 6 years and 11 to 12 years of age.

Hepatitis A / Hepatitis B

Hepatitis immunizations are recommended for some people based on behavioral, occupational, medical and other risk factors. Hepatitis risk is not increased due to exposure to flood waters. Please contact your healthcare provider to discuss your need for vaccination.

Buchanan County Public Health does not provide adult tetanus vaccines. It is recommended to contact your family healthcare provider if you feel you may need a tetanus booster vaccine. The department provides immunizations for children through the age of 18 if health insurance does not pay for vaccine or the child does not have health insurance. Call Buchanan County Public Health Department at 319-332-0860 to set up an appointment if your child qualifies.

Amy Marlow, Director of the Buchanan County Public Health Department emphasizes, "Please keep disease in mind during the flood and subsequent clean-up by using practical ways to keep you and your family safe."

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