

# **Public Health Hazards in Relation to Flooding**

## **Tetanus**

First aid, even for minor cuts and burns, is very important during flood clean-up. Immediately clean out all open wounds and cuts with soap and clean water. Most cuts, except minor scratches, will require treatment to prevent tetanus. Talk to a doctor to find out what treatment you need.

Avoid wading in water without proper foot protection. Broken glass, metal fragments, and other debris may be submerged in the flooded area. Wear proper eyewear, gloves, and other protective equipment when cleaning an area. If you are cut or punctured, contact your physician or local health department as soon as possible. Tetanus vaccinations may be necessary. We have tetanus available at the Community Services Building, and are contacting local townships to possibly establish clinics in those areas.

## **Water Safety**

Do not use water for drinking, brushing teeth, cooking, or making ice unless you are certain that it is safe.

The DNR is recommending that if wells are submerged they should be disinfected prior to completing a well sample. Please contact the Public Health Department or check out our website for further information regarding the technique involved with disinfecting a well. The Public Health Department is recommending that all well samples be postponed until at least next Monday, August 27<sup>th</sup> to avoid a sample being considered too old to test due to the upcoming weekend. Water test kits may be picked up at the Community Services Building Monday through Friday from 8am – 5pm.

## **Mold**

After a flood, mold will grow in your house and can make you sick. Items that were wet for 2 or more days should be taken outside, as they have mold growing on them even if you can't see it. Hard surfaced items can be cleaned with soap and water and then sanitized with a bleach solution. Cloth items can be washed in hot water. Please contact the Public Health Department or check out our website for further information regarding the techniques involved with removing mold from household items.

## **Mosquitoes**

Elimination of artificial breeding sites such as tin cans, tires, and tree holes will help control the breeding of pest and disease carrying mosquitoes. Empty, remove, cover, or turn upside down any receptacle that could hold water. Properly discard unused tires and keep wanted tires inside or under cover. Also, make sure rain gutters and downspouts are clean and draining properly.

Use repellent safely. Choose a product that meets your needs for the time you will be outdoors and the amount of mosquito activity, and use the repellent according to label directions. Spray repellent sparingly and only on exposed skin or on the top of clothing. Do not spray repellents in a confined space and do not apply repellents to children's

hands or allow them to apply repellants. Wash treated skin when protection is no longer needed.

The most effective repellants contain DEET. Products containing 30% DEET are considered safe in routine control of ticks and mosquitoes in adults and children over two months of age. No adverse effects from DEET use have been reported in pregnant or lactating women.

Richland County Health & Human Services Public Health Department: **(608) 647-8564**  
Flood Information Website: [co.richland.wi.us](http://co.richland.wi.us)

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