



**NJDHSS Epidemiology, Environmental & Occupational Health
Public Call Center Talking Points
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New items have asterisk (*) and are italicized

Animals and Insects

Are pets allowed in human evacuation shelters?

Emergency management plans address the evacuation and sheltering of pets, but human shelter facilities are not required to allow pets to stay with their owners and may instead have an animal shelter set up adjacent to, or near, the human shelter. Precautions should be instituted at animal sheltering facilities to prevent animals from being the source of animal bites, disease transmission, allergies and nuisances to both evacuees and other pets.

I have noticed stray dogs and cats in my neighborhood, what should I do?

Animal control officers (ACOs) are authorized to capture stray and free-roaming animals, arrange for them to receive medical care if needed, shelter them and reunite them with their owners. Complaints or requests for assistance regarding stray animals should be directed to municipal animal control or the municipal offices or police to dispatch an ACO. Animal control is an important public safety component of emergency response plans.

What do I do if I'm bitten by an animal?

Wash the wound and gather as much information as you can about the biting animals (such as owners name and contact information, if it is a pet); then contact the local health department with jurisdiction over the location of the incident. The local health department will have staff to evaluate the risk of rabies and the need for animal confinement or rabies preventative treatment.

My pet was exposed to flood water and may have gotten sick as a result of the flooding and aftermath of the storm, what should I do?

Wash your pet utilizing pet shampoo, baby shampoo or Dawn dish detergent and rinse the fur completely with clean water and watch for signs of illness, such as diarrhea, vomiting, inflamed skin, and weakness. Contact your veterinarian or a veterinary hospital in your vicinity for medical treatment if your pet becomes ill. Regional veterinary emergency hospitals provide medical services on nights, weekends and holidays.

Who can assist with a disease outbreak at an animal shelter?

Contact the local health department with jurisdiction over the animal shelter for assistance. Local health department staff can investigate the situation and collaborate with the animal shelter management and the veterinarian responsible for disease control at the shelter to identify the cause of illness and institute corrective action. The local health department will also investigate reports of sick animals potentially spreading disease to people and may consult with the State Department of Health and Senior Services, Veterinary Public Health Unit. In addition, counties have established County Animal Response Teams (CART) to provide assistance in animal-related situations.

How can I protect myself against mosquitoes after the flood?

Due to the large amount of rain and flooding (some of which preceded Hurricane Irene), we will likely anticipate increased mosquito numbers over the next few weeks. County mosquito control units are working hard to decrease mosquito populations, but residents should also make sure to employ personal protection measures such as limiting time outdoors during peak mosquito activity times (dusk and dawn), wearing long sleeved shirts and long pants, and using mosquito repellents. Residents should also empty any containers that collect standing water and clean up and refill bird baths every few days.

Bleach dilution

How do you make a diluted bleach solution?

This depends how you will use the mixture/solution. See the chart below.

Use	Bleach (unscented liquid chlorine)	Water
To drink	1/8 teaspoon or 8 drops	1 gallon
To rinse plates/dishes	1 tablespoon	1 gallon
To clean hard household surfaces (countertops, food cans, toys, flatware, tools, etc.)	1 cup	1 gallon
To kill mold	1 cup	1 gallon
To clean pool surfaces	1 cup	5 gallons

Carbon monoxide concerns

What is Carbon monoxide and where does it come from?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas. In your home CO is formed when fuels such as natural gas, propane, heating oil, kerosene, coal or wood are not completely burned. Gas stoves, hot water heaters, furnaces, fireplaces, space heaters and wood-burning stoves can all be sources of CO if they are not used or maintained properly. Powered electric generators used during power outages are also a major source of indoor CO. It is important that CO levels remain low; otherwise, it may become a health and safety concern.

Why is carbon monoxide a health concern?

Carbon monoxide is a health concern because at elevated levels it is poisonous. When carbon monoxide is inhaled it is immediately absorbed into your blood stream. Once there, it forms a substance (carboxyhemoglobin) which has the ability to block oxygen from being absorbed and used by your body. As you continue to inhale CO, more and more of this substance is formed in your blood and eventually your body becomes more starved of oxygen.

What are warning signs of carbon monoxide poisoning?

Exposure to CO can cause loss of consciousness and death. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. People who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol can die from CO poisoning before ever having symptoms. Infants, the elderly, and people with anemia or heart or respiratory disease are more sensitive to CO exposures.

What can you do to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning?

- Buy CO detectors which meet Underwriters Laboratory Standard, UL 2034, and install them at the proper location(s) within your home.
- Never run a generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or windows are open.
- Never run your car, generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine outside an open window, door, or vent where exhaust can vent into your home.
- Never leave a vehicle running inside an attached or detached garage, regardless if ventilation is provided or if the garage door is open.
- Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern, or portable camping stove inside your home.
- Do not use ovens, ranges or other natural gas appliances as a substitute for heating your home.
- Have chimneys and exhaust flues professionally inspected and serviced.
- Have a qualified contractor service all gas and heat appliances and perform routine maintenance at intervals specified by the manufacturer.
- Do not attempt to service your gas and heating appliances without proper knowledge, training and tools.
- If CO poisoning is suspected, consult a health care professional immediately.

Cleaning/Mold removal

Is it safe to cook in my kitchen after flooding?

Yes, but precautions must be taken to protect food contact surfaces from contaminating your food. When cleaning or disinfecting, wear protective clothing, such as gloves, to avoid skin contact, irritation, or infection.

- Discard wooden cutting boards, wooden dishes and utensils, plastic utensils, baby bottle nipples, and pacifiers that have come into contact with flood water. These items cannot be safely cleaned.
- Thoroughly wash countertops with soap and water, using hot water if available. Rinse, and then sanitize with a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water (or the cleanest, clearest water available). Allow to air dry.
- Make sure to clean corners, cracks and crevices, door handles, and door seals, in rooms that have been affected by flood water.

How should I clean my pots, pans, dishes and utensils?

Thoroughly wash metal pans, ceramic dishes and utensils (including can openers) with hot soap and water. Rinse and then sanitize them by boiling in clean water or immersing them for 15 minutes in a diluted bleach solution (1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per 1 gallon of drinking water). Allow to air dry.

How should I clean my countertops?

Wash countertops with soap and water, using hot water if possible. Rinse and then sanitize with a diluted bleach solution (1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per 1 gallon of drinking water). Allow to air dry.

What is the best way to clean sheetrock/plaster walls/crawlspaces after a flood?

Remove all water soaked sheetrock and insulation between wall joists to allow the wall cavity areas to dry. For plaster walls, openings can be made in the top and bottom of the walls to allow water to drain and air to circulate. If power is available, use fans to circulate the air and dehumidifiers to assist. Hiring a professional drying service may be necessary. Crawlspaces beneath the building may be difficult to clean and dry out. Bacterial growth can be a significant concern in these areas. Crawlspaces are often small spaces to work and could be considered a confined space. Without proper ventilation and safety precautions do not enter these areas. Seek professional assistance to evaluate and clean these areas.

How do I clean ventilation systems after flooding?

Cleaning the ventilation system ductwork may be necessary to remove debris caused by flooding. The system should be inspected prior to using. Bacteria can be spread by the HVAC system so disinfection may be necessary. Not all disinfectants are appropriate for use in cleaning the ventilation system. Make

sure the products being used are approved for use in the ventilation system before using them. Professional assistance may be needed for proper cleaning of the system.

****How do I find out if I have mold?**

Identifying mold in your home should always begin with a thorough visual inspection. An inspection can be done by a homeowner or by a qualified environmental consultant. Please note that there are no state or federal regulations which cover mold inspections. The inspection may be focused on specific areas where moisture has been seen, where flooding or water damage has occurred or in common areas known for mold growth such as basements, attics and crawl spaces. Stained or discolored areas of walls and ceilings that continue to increase in size or change colors can be signs of mold growth. A strong musty smell is also an indicator of mold growth.

****Should my home be tested for mold?**

If a visual inspection shows the presence of mold, additional testing is not necessary. The focus should be on correcting any moisture problems and cleaning up the mold contamination. However, if mold is not found during a visual inspection and is still suspected of being present, additional testing may be necessary. Testing for mold should always be performed by a qualified person. Your Local Health Department may be able to assist or an environmental consultant who specializes in or has experience in evaluating mold contamination should be contacted.

****What additional environmental testing do I need/should I consider?**

Additional testing may include an evaluation of the relative humidity in the home and taking moisture readings of building materials in suspected areas. Swab testing of suspected surfaces and bulk samples of building materials may also be performed. Specialized air testing is also an option for identifying mold spores (MVOCs) from mold growth. However, these specialized air tests can be very expensive and need to be conducted in context with an overall assessment plan. **Caution should be taken when considering air testing since there are no state or federal standards for determining an acceptable level of mold in the air.** Careful interpretation of air sampling results is also very important since individual susceptibility and health status varies. If air sampling is conducted, an outside reference sample should also be collected at the same time for comparison with the indoor samples.

****Who should I hire to test my home for mold?**

There are no state or federal regulations which cover mold inspections. Environmental consultants are not required to obtain a license or certification to conduct mold inspections. Homeowners should make sure that any consultant performing work has received proper training and are familiar with current industry standards for performing inspections.

How should I discard moldy items?

Use gloves or other personal protection when cleaning items. People with asthma and allergies should not remove mold. Exposure to mold may cause these people to become sick. Clean all hard surfaces with a bleach and water solution (1 cup bleach to 1 gallon of water) to kill germs and mold. Wash hands after touching anything that has touched flood water. Wash all clothing worn during clean-up in hot water separate from the laundering of routine clothing.

What can I do to prevent mold in my home?

To prevent mold, wash surface areas in your home, including the walls, staircases and items that came in contact with floodwater. Disinfect with bleach solution and wipe surfaces dry with paper towels to minimize bacterial contamination.

My home was flooded. How do I know what household items can be saved and what I should throw away?

Take things that were wet for 2 or more days outside. Things that stayed wet for 2 days have mold growing on them even if you can't see it.

- Take out items made of cloth, unless you can wash them in hot water.
- Also throw away items that can't be cleaned easily (like leather, paper, wood, mattresses, and carpet).
- Throw away any items that do not dry completely because they can harbor germs and produce mold, which can irritate allergies as well as lead to respiratory or other illnesses.

- Keep the humidity and temperature as low as possible.
- Remove any moldy objects as soon as possible. Wash hands after touching anything that has touched flood water.
- Use bleach to clean mold off hard things (like floors, stoves, sinks, certain toys, countertops, flatware, plates, and tools).

What is the best way to clean up after a flood?

Follow these tips to clean up after a flood:

- Never mix bleach with ammonia or other cleaners.
- Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, goggles, and N-95 mask.
- Open windows and doors to get fresh air when you use bleach.
- Mix no more than 1 cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water.
- Wash the item with the bleach and water mixture.
- If the surface of the item is rough, scrub the surface with a stiff brush.
- Rinse the item with clean water.
- Dry the item or leave it out to dry.
- If available, use a shop vacuum equipped with a HEPA filter to trap dust.

Communicable disease prevention

How can you protect yourself against infectious diseases?

There are steps you can take to avoid injury and prevent infection while working in flood-affected areas.

Recommendations include:

- Clean your hands as often as possible. Use soap and water if your hands are visibly soiled, and rub your hands together for at least 15 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand rub if your hands are not visibly soiled.
- Take care of cuts or wounds immediately
 - Clean your hands thoroughly with soap and water before cleaning a wound
 - Clean the wound with soap and clean water
 - Pat the wound dry and apply a clean, dry dressing
 - See a healthcare provider for any dirty wounds, bites or punctures
 - Contact your healthcare provider if you are bitten by an animal.
- Wear protective clothing
 - Heavy, waterproof, cut-resistant work gloves
 - Safety goggles
 - Heavy, hard-soled boots
 - Long-sleeved shirt and long pants

What is the best way to prevent the spread of germs after a flood?

Keeping hands clean during an emergency helps prevent the spread of germs. If your tap water is not safe to use, wash your hands with soap and water that has been boiled or disinfected. Follow these steps to make sure you wash your hands properly:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
- Rub your hands together to make a lather and scrub them well; be sure to scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Continue rubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.
- A temporary handwashing station can be created by using a large water jug that contains clean water (for example, boiled or disinfected).

If I don't have running water, can I use hand sanitizer instead of washing my hands?

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs. Hand sanitizers are not effective when hands are visibly dirty.

When should I wash my hands?

Wash hands with soap and clean, running water (if available):

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal or animal waste
- After touching garbage
- Before and after treating a cut or wound

Drinking water**How do I know whether my house is served by a water system that has issued a boil water advisory?**

Officials will inform the public by TV, radio, and newspaper. Some water systems or local governments may use reverse-911 to alert residents by phone. Some water systems or towns may also post information on their website or deploy vehicles with loudspeakers.

What should I do if a boil water advisory has been issued?

If a boil water advisory has been issued, the water coming into your house (tap water), may be unsafe to drink. Heat and hold the water at a rolling boil for 1 minute. Then let it cool. Water can be stored in the refrigerator if there is electricity. Drinking and cooking with boiled water is safe for humans and pets.

Ice cubes prepared before the start of the boil water advisory can be used. Ice cubes made afterward must be thrown away. Dishwashing machines can be used if the final rinse is 113° F for 20 minutes, 122° F for 5 minutes or 160° F for 1 minute. Check the dishwasher manual for details on heat cycles.

What should I do if a boil water advisory has been issued?

If a boil water advisory has been issued, the tap water coming into your house, the tap water, may be unsafe to drink. Heat and hold the water at a rolling boil for 1 minute, then let it cool. Drink and cook with boiled or bottled water. Drinking and cooking with boiled water is safe for humans and pets.

It is OK to bathe in tap water?

It's safe to bathe in tap water. Children and the disabled should be supervised. Everyone should avoid getting tap water in their mouth or eyes. It is recommended to use boiled water to brush your teeth.

How will I know that it is safe to drink tap water?

Officials will inform the public when the tap water is safe to drink. Local officials will test the water to know for certain when it is safe to drink. Continue to use boiled water until the tests show the tap water is safe. When the advisory is lifted, flush your water taps for 2-3 minutes. Empty and clean your automatic ice makers and water chillers. Drain and refill your hot water heater if set at a low temperature (below 113°F).

My home was flooded and I am worried about the safety of the drinking water. What should I do?

Use bottled water that has not been exposed to flood water, if available. If you don't have bottled water, you should boil tap water to make sure it is safe. Boiling water will kill most types of disease causing germs. Bring the tap water to a rolling boil for one minute. Let it cool and store it in clean containers with covers/lids. If the water is cloudy, filter it through a clean cloth or allow it to settle and use the clear water from the top of the container.

I don't have any electric/power and can't boil water. Any other suggestions?

Use bottled water, if possible. If you can't boil water, you can disinfect it using household bleach. Bleach will kill some, but not all, types of disease-causing organisms that may be in the water. If the water is cloudy, filter it through clean cloths or allow it to settle, and use the clear water from the top of the container. Add 1/8 teaspoon (or 8 drops) of regular, unscented, liquid household bleach per each gallon of water. Stir it well and let it stand for at least 30 minutes before you use it. Store disinfected water in clean containers with covers/lids.

Should I be concerned about the safety of my water?

Hurricanes and flooding can contaminate the public water supply. Water may not be safe to drink. Pay attention to the radio, TV, or other news outlets for information on your local water supply. Announcements should give you updated information and let you know if you need to boil your water to make it safe to drink. Otherwise, use bottled water until your tap water is safe to use and drink.

I have a well. Is it safe to drink the water?

If you have a private well and it was covered by flood water, flush the well until the water is clear and free of sediment, then test the well for bacteria; do not drink the water until it's been tested. It is best to sample the water before it reaches the water storage tank. If bacteria are found, the well must be disinfected. You can disinfect using unscented bleach. The well should be inspected during the disinfection. Directions may be found at: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/disinfectionofprivatewells.pdf>

How do I flush a well?

To flush a well: Attach a hose to an outside spigot. Open the spigot. Let the water run until it is clear and free of dirt and sediment.

Can I use a home water filter if I don't have bottled water or in place of boiling water?

Most home water filters do not provide adequate protection when a boil water advisory is issued. Activated carbon filters do not remove microorganisms. At this time, there is no boil water advisory.

What steps should I take to make sure my tap water is safe after a boil water advisory is lifted?

There are steps you can take after a boil water advisory has been lifted to make sure that your tap water is safe. Run your water faucets for 2- 3 minutes. Empty and clean your automatic ice makers and water chillers. Drain and refill your hot water heater if set at a low temperature (below 113°F). And if you have a water softener, run it through a regeneration cycle.

Flood water/Sewage

Is flood water safe?

Protect yourself from flood water; flood water is dangerous. Flooding may cause municipal sewage systems and residential sanitary systems to back flow into homes and buildings. Materials and items damaged by flood water containing raw sewage must be handled carefully. Avoid contact with the flood water and wear protective clothing; gloves, masks, boots. Throw away any food or drink that the flood water touched. Broken glass, sharp pieces of wood, and other sharp items (nails, screws, sheet metal) may also be in the flood water.

Are there health risks associated with flood water?

Yes, flood water can pose health risk including infectious disease and chemical hazards. Swallowing (ingesting) flood water can cause diarrheal disease. Additionally, since broken glass and other sharp objects may be in flood water, you should have a first aid kit to treat minor cuts and abrasions to prevent infection. Open wounds and rashes exposed to flood water can become infected. It is important to avoid flood water when possible if you have an open wound. Cover any wound immediately with a waterproof bandage and keep it as clean as possible. If swelling or redness occurs, seek immediate medical care.

What can I do to protect my home from mold?

Open all doors and windows and use fans to allow air to circulate and dry out the whole house. Completely dry hard (non-porous) surfaces, then clean and disinfect the hard surfaces with dilute bleach.

What cleaning products can I use to clean up after the flood?

Cleaning materials such as bleach and water solution, disinfectants and other cleaning products may be used. Never mix cleaning products. Never use gasoline powered generators or power washers inside a building. Always wear rubber boots, gloves, mask and goggles when cleaning.

Food Safety

Flood waters covered our food stored on shelves and in cabinets. What can I keep and what should I throw out?

Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with flood water. Discard any food that is not in a waterproof container. Food containers that are not waterproof include those with screw-caps, snap lids, pull tops and crimped caps. Also, throw out cardboard juice/milk/baby formula boxes and home canned foods if they have come in contact with flood water, because they cannot be cleaned and/or sanitized.

How do I know whether to throw away canned foods that were exposed to flood water?

Inspect canned foods and **discard any food in damaged cans**. Can damage is shown by swelling, leakage, punctures, holes, fractures, extensive deep rusting, or crushing/denting severe enough to prevent normal stacking or opening with a manual, wheel-type can opener.

Can I eat the food that was in cans or sealed pouches?

Undamaged, commercially prepared foods in all-metal cans and "retort pouches" (such as flexible, shelf-stable juice or seafood pouches) can be saved by following these instructions:

- Remove the labels, if they are the removable kind, since they can harbor dirt and bacteria.
- Brush or wipe away any dirt or silt.
- Thoroughly wash the cans or retort pouches with soap and water, using hot water if it is available. Rinse the cans or retort pouches with water that is safe for drinking, if available, since dirt or residual soap will reduce the effectiveness of chlorine sanitation.
- Sanitize cans and retort pouches by immersion in one of the two following ways:
 - Place in water and allow the water to come to a boil and continue boiling for 2 minutes, or
 - Place in a freshly-made solution consisting of 1 tablespoon of unscented liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water (or the cleanest, clearest water available) for 15 minutes.
- Air dry cans or retort pouches for a minimum of 1 hour before opening or storing.
- If the labels were removable, then re-label your cans or retort pouches, including the expiration date (if available), with a marking pen.
- Food in reconditioned cans or retort pouches should be used as soon as possible.
- Any concentrated baby formula in reconditioned, all-metal containers must be diluted with clean, drinking water.

Some of the food in the freezer started to thaw or had thawed when the power came back on. Is the food safe?

You will have to evaluate each item separately. Never taste food to determine its safety! Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was out for no more than 4 hours and the refrigerator door was kept shut.

- Check the thermometer in the back of your refrigerator or freezer.
- If the appliance thermometer stored in the freezer reads 40 °F or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen. If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, check each package of food to determine the safety.
- You cannot rely on appearance or odor.
- If the food has ice crystals or is 40 °F or below, it is safe to refreeze it.
- Throw out perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish/seafood, milk, eggs and leftovers that have been above 40 °F for 2 hours.

May I refreeze the food in the freezer if it thawed or partially thawed?

Some food may be safely refrozen if the food still contains ice crystals or at 40°F or below. Throw out items in the freezer or refrigerator that have come into contact with raw meat juices.

I can't afford to throw out all of the food that was in my refrigerator/freezer. Can I really get sick if I eat the food?

If you plan to eat refrigerated or frozen meat, poultry, fish or eggs while it is still at safe temperatures, it's important that each item is thoroughly cooked to the proper temperature to assure that any foodborne bacteria that may be present is destroyed. However, if at any point the food was above 40 °F for 2 hours or more it should be thrown away.

How long can my refrigerator/freezer keep food safe when the power is off?

Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature. The refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened. A full freezer will keep the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed. Buy dry or block ice to keep the refrigerator as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic foot fully-stocked freezer cold for two days.

Personal health

Is it OK to flush my old/expired/unwanted/unused medications down the toilet to get rid of them?

Do not dispose of medication down the drain or toilet. Over the counter and prescription medications should not be disposed down the drain or by flushing them in the toilet. Properly disposing of unwanted and expired medications in the trash promotes a healthy aquatic environment and prevents accidental poisoning and intentional abuse. After a flood, septic systems are vulnerable and medications should not be flushed. To get rid of medications, follow these instructions:

- Mark out personal information
- Mix with water and coffee grinds, cat litter, or dirt
- Seal in opaque container or in a dark plastic bag
- Put in the trash

Swimming pools

I have a swimming pool in my backyard and flood waters flowed into the pool. Is it safe to swim in?

It is recommended that you drain all of the water in the pool. Wash down pool surfaces (walls, floor, hand rails or steps, diving boards, lifeguard stands etc) with chlorinated water concentration - 1 cup per 5 gallons. After the pool has been cleaned, refill it with clean (potable) water and then shock the pool for 13 hours (at least 20 ppm solution).

After cleaning and refilling, you should test the water chemistry in the pool for the following:

- pH (7.2 – 7.8)
- Free chlorine (10 ppm max) and Combined chlorine ($\leq .2$)
- Total alkalinity (60 to 180)
- Stabilizer (cyanuric acid - 10 to 100 ppm and only in outdoor pools)
- Pool water clarity

I have a swimming pool in my backyard and flood waters didn't get into the pool. Is it safe to swim in?

If no flood waters got into the pool, you do not need to drain the pool. However, you should do the following:

- Shock pool with 20 ppm chlorine
- Wait 4 to 6 hours
- Test chemistry: pH (7.2 – 7.8); Free chlorine (10 ppm max) and Combined chlorine ($\leq .2$); Total alkalinity (60 to 180); Stabilizer (cyanuric acid - 10 to 100 ppm and only in outdoor pools)

I am a member at a public/community pool. Is it safe to swim in the water?

Public pools need a water sample by the pool operator/owner. Do not swim in a pool without asking about testing has been done after flooding to determine the water quality. You may also contact your local health department before you swim at a public pool.

Is it safe to swim in the ocean/go to beaches?

To determine if the water is safe to swim, to learn of beach/water advisories and closings, check the NJ Department of Environmental Protection website at www.njbeaches.org

Vaccination recommendations

Are there any vaccination recommendations for residents?

As recovery efforts continue in the flooded areas of New Jersey, questions are being raised regarding the need for tetanus shots or other vaccinations. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), outbreaks of infectious disease after floods such as we experienced here in NJ are unusual, and there is generally no increased risk of getting vaccine preventable diseases. However, since each situation is unique, there may be the need to vaccinate particular individuals involved in clean-up efforts, medical care or living in communal settings.

Should I get a tetanus shot?

The same recommendations that apply at any other time also apply during a flood.

Everyone should be immunized with a primary series of tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis-containing vaccine. You should get a booster dose of tetanus-diphtheria toxoid (Td) if you have not had a booster dose within the last 10 years. Td boosters every 10 years are routinely recommended for all adults. The concern with flooding is that clean-up and repairs present an increased risk of injury and tetanus from such injuries is preventable by vaccination. Adults who did not receive DTP or DTaP as a child, or whose tetanus vaccination history is not known should receive a primary series of three doses of adult Td.

People who have a wound should check with their healthcare provider promptly to see if they need to be vaccinated. An assessment of the wound and the person's immunization history will determine whether a vaccine is recommended. For puncture wounds, or wounds at risk for contamination (e.g., substances contaminated with feces, soil, or saliva) a tetanus shot is recommended if they haven't had one within the last five years. If they haven't had at least three previous tetanus shots at some point in the past, a dose of tetanus immune globulin is recommended. For people who sustain clean, minor wounds, a tetanus-containing shot is recommended if they haven't had one within the past ten years.

Should I get a hepatitis shot?

There is no recommendation for mass vaccination with hepatitis A during flood events. The virus is not common in the US and is generally not present even in sewage. Hepatitis A can be transmitted if displaced people live in crowded conditions for a long time and in these circumstances, vaccination is recommended for people living in these settings.

There is no increased risk of hepatitis B during a flood unless unvaccinated volunteers or healthcare workers are involved in high-risk activities.

I don't have a doctor/health insurance, where can I get these vaccines?

Contact your local health department or the nearest Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). To find your local health department, go to: <http://nj.gov/health/lh/directory/lhdselectcounty.shtml>
To find an FQHC, go to <http://www.njpc.org/FQHC/directory.aspx>

Fore more information (websites/hotlines)

Where can I get more information about personal, environmental and food safety?

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/>
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) www.fema.gov (800) 621.3362
 - To apply for disaster assistance: www.disasterassistance.gov
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm076881.htm>
- NJ Dept of Environmental Protection hotline: 1-877-WARNDEP (1-877-927-6337)
<http://www.nj.gov/dep/warndep.htm>

- NJ Dept of Health & Sr. Svcs. Food and Drug Safety Program
<http://www.state.nj.us/health/foodanddrugsafety/consumer.shtml>
- New Jersey Office of Emergency Management <http://www.ready.nj.gov>
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) www.usda.gov

