

May 27, 2015

DSHS Offers Health-Related Precautions Following Recent Storms

Health officials are offering the following health-related precautions for people in areas affected by heavy rains and flooding:

Mosquitoes

- Standing water after floods is a breeding place for mosquitoes. Regularly drain standing water, including water collecting in empty cans, tires, buckets, clogged rain gutters and saucers under potted plants.
- Protect yourself with an insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol products. Always follow label directions.
- Make sure door, porch and window screens are in good condition.

Hygiene and Injuries

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water during cleanup, especially before handling food.
- Wear shoes in post-flood areas to reduce the chances of punctures or cuts from nails and other sharp contaminated objects. People with puncture wounds or cuts exposed to flood water could be at risk of contracting tetanus and may need to have a tetanus shot to prevent infection.
- Do not allow children to play in or near flood water or storm drains.

Environmental Hazards

- Snakes, bats and other wildlife may seek shelter in trees, homes and vehicles. They are may be injured in heavy rains and winds. Do not handle any wildlife.
- Seek immediate treatment if bitten or injured by an animal.

Water

- Follow "boil water" alerts that may be issued by local or state officials. Do not drink water from unknown sources.
- People under "boil water" alerts and people with private wells that may have been contaminated by floodwater should use only bottled, boiled or treated water until water has been tested and found safe.

Lack of Electricity

- Those without electricity should use extreme caution with generators and other carbon monoxide producing devices.
- To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, do not burn charcoal or use gasoline-powered generators or pumps indoors or outside near open windows.

Heat

- Drink plenty of fluids while working outside.
- Take frequent breaks to conserve energy and avoid heat stress.
- People with heart conditions and other illnesses should avoid strenuous exertion.
- At the first signs of heat illness – dizziness, heavy sweating, nausea, headaches, muscle cramps – move to a cooler location, rest and slowly drink a cool liquid. Seek medical attention immediately if conditions do not improve.

For more information about health-related precautions, visit: www.texasprepares.org.