

# Injury and Infection Prevention During Floods

Floodwater and standing waters can be dangerous and can make you vulnerable to infectious diseases and injuries. Here are some ways to protect yourself and your loved ones from floodwater risks:

## Don't drive in flooded areas

Cars can be swept away or may stall in moving water.



## Stay out of floodwater, if possible

- Stay out of creeks, streams and the ocean during and for at least **3 days** after rainfall.
- Floodwaters contain many things that may harm health, such as debris and other physical objects and human and livestock waste.
- Exposure to floodwater can cause wound infections, skin rashes, gastrointestinal illness and other infections.
- If you are exposed to floodwater, avoid swallowing the water and wash exposed areas with soap and water as soon as possible.



## If you need to enter floodwater, like during flood cleanup, follow these steps to avoid injury and prevent infection:

- Wash often with soap and water
- Wear protective clothing, such as rubber boots, rubber gloves, long pants, long-sleeved shirts and goggles
- Take care of any wounds right away by:
  1. Washing hands first
  2. Cleaning wound with soap and water
  3. Patting dry and applying a clean, dry dressing
  4. See your doctor to determine if you need a tetanus shot



## Do not eat or drink anything contaminated by floodwater

- Floodwater can cause diarrheal disease (such as E. Coli or Salmonella infection).
- Wash your hands after contact with floodwater with soap and water and always before meals.



*Tetanus and other diseases prevented by vaccines are uncommon in floods and other disasters. While it is always a good idea to make sure immunizations are up-to-date, there are no special recommendations for tetanus immunizations during flood situations.*