



Coping With Floods – During a Flood

What to do while flooding occurs:

You've done everything in your power to prepare for a flood. You've secured a flood insurance policy, and made your home flood-ready. Now, the floodwaters are rising, and there's nothing you can do to stop them. But there are things you can do to make sure your family stays safe until the water levels drop again.

- Fill bathtubs, sinks, and jugs with clean water in case water becomes contaminated.
- Listen to a battery-operated radio for the latest storm information.
- If local authorities instruct you to do so, turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve.
- If told to evacuate your home, do so immediately.
- If the waters start to rise inside your house before you have evacuated, retreat to the second floor, the attic, and if necessary, the roof.
- Floodwaters may carry raw sewage, chemical waste and other disease-spreading substances. If you've come in contact with floodwaters, wash your hands with soap and disinfected water.
- Avoid walking through floodwaters. As little as six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet.
- Don't drive through a flooded area. If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. A car can be carried away by just 2 feet of flood water.
- Electric current passes easily through water, so stay away from downed power lines and electrical wires.
- Look out for animals -- especially snakes. Animals lose their homes in floods, too.

The best way to prevent harm during a flood is to be prepared with information and supplies. Remember that flood conditions change rapidly and severe flooding can develop in minutes.

Flood water levels can be much deeper than they appear. The depth of water may be difficult to assess. Only two feet of water can cause a car to be swept away, and as little as six inches can cause unstable footing.

Never try to drive through floodwater. Water can be deeper than it appears, and water levels can rise very quickly. If a car stalls in floodwater, get out quickly and move to higher ground. Do not walk or drive through flood waters. More people drown in their cars during a flood than anywhere else.

Floods and storms can also knock down power lines. If you lose power, never use a gas oven, range, barbecue, hibachi or portable propane heater to heat your home. These units use up the oxygen you need to breathe and give off deadly carbon monoxide which have caused people to die from suffocation.

If you see downed power lines, do not try to repair or grab them. Even when flood water levels appear to have subsided, electrical currents can travel through the remaining water for more than 100 yards. Contact your utility company or police department to report downed power lines.

If your well has been flooded, assume the water in your home has been contaminated. If you are on a public water system, listen to your radio and television for news from public health departments to find out if your water is contaminated. If water is contaminated, bottled water is the best choice. If you can, get commercially bottled water that has been stored for less than 6 months in tightly sealed containers. Plan for one gallon per person per day. Flood waters may carry silt, raw sewage, oil or chemical waste. Wash your hands frequently with soap and disinfected water to prevent spread of disease. This should be done before preparing or eating food, after toilet use, and after flood clean up when your hands may have touched articles contaminated from water or sewage. When in doubt, throw out fresh, frozen or dry food, such as cereal, that may have been in contact with the water.

If you can, wear gloves and boots at all times to avoid touching anything with bare hands or feet. Parents should not allow children to play in flood areas and should ensure that their children wash hands often.

To be better prepared for an emergency, keep a battery operated radio and a flashlight on hand. For more information, contact your local health department or emergency management agency.

If Your Home is Flooded

- Utilities should be turned off. Don't turn them on until notified that it is safe to do so.
- Avoid weakened structures, particularly floors, walls and rooftops to avoid structural damage.
- Do not pump basement out until flood water recedes.

Drinking Water

- If your well has been flooded, assume the water in your home has been contaminated.
- If you are receive water from public source, your local health jurisdiction will let you know, through local media, if your water is not safe to drink.
- Bottled water is the best choice. If you can, get commercially bottled water that has been stored for less than 6 months in tightly sealed containers. Plan for one gallon per person per day.

Resources Are Available

Additional information, self-help tools and other resources are available online at www.MagellanHealth.com/member. Or call us for more information, help and support. Counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you.

This document is for your information only. It is not meant to give medical advice. It should not be used to replace a visit with a provider. Magellan Health does not endorse other resources that may be mentioned here.