



Dutchess County Department of Health Public Health Advisory*

Subscribe to Public Health Updates at: <http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/Health/16586.htm>

Michael C. Caldwell, MD, MPH
Commissioner of Health



William R. Steinhaus³
County Executive

Protecting the Health of Emergency Personnel After a Hurricane or Flood

Date: September 1, 2011 4:00 pm

Please Distribute to: Fire, Police, Emergency Responders, Public Works

SUMMARY:

1. **Emergency Response Personnel are advised to review this advisory for important information regarding:**
 - **Recommended Immunizations**
 - **First Aid Precautions**
 - **Water-borne and Mosquito-borne Communicable Disease.**
2. **Any questions related to exposure, please contact your healthcare provider or contact the Dutchess County Department of Health at 845-486-3402.**

Immunization Recommendations for Disaster Responders:

Tetanus: In accordance with the current CDC guidelines, responders should receive a tetanus booster if they have not been vaccinated for tetanus during the past 10 years. Td (tetanus/diphtheria) or Tdap (tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis) can be used; getting the Tdap formula for one tetanus booster during adulthood is recommended to maintain protection against pertussis. **While documentation of vaccination is preferred, it should not be a prerequisite to work.**

Hepatitis B: Hepatitis B vaccine series for persons who will be performing direct patient care or otherwise expected to have contact with blood or body fluids. **Contact with contaminated flood waters is not a risk for exposure to Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C.**

There is no indication for the following vaccines for responders in the USA:

Hepatitis A vaccine (low probability of exposure). Vaccine takes 1-2 weeks to provide substantial immunity.

Typhoid vaccine (low probability of exposure).

Cholera vaccine (low probability of exposure, no licensed cholera vaccine available in the U.S.).

Meningococcal vaccine (no expectation of increased risk of disease among emergency responders).

Rabies vaccine series (the full series is required for protection). Persons who are exposed to potentially rabid animals should be evaluated and receive standard post-exposure prophylaxis, as clinically appropriate.

(page one of two)

***Health Alert**- conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention; **Health Advisory**- provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action; **Health Update**- provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Dutchess County Department of Health

387 Main Street, Poughkeepsie NY 12601 • (845) 486-3400 • Fax (845) 486-3447 • TTY (845) 486-3417

First Aid:

First Aid, even for minor cuts and burns is very important during floods and clean up. Immediately clean all wounds and cuts with soap and clean water. Apply antibiotic ointment. If a wound gets red, swells or drains seek medical attention.

Potential Exposure to Communicable Diseases during floods

Water-Borne Diseases

In the United States flooding does not usually increase the risk of exposure to water-borne diseases such as Giardiasis and other water-borne diseases. The major risk can occur when the flooding can cause contamination of a drinking water facilities, In that case, a clean water provision would be advised for that jurisdiction. The risk to individual responders is minimal and universal enteric precautions should be adhered to. That includes, not swallowing or drinking contaminated water, wearing protective gloves, and proper hand-washing. If there was an exposure and you develop sudden onset of nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps you should see your provider.

Mosquito-Borne Diseases

Flood waters may increase mosquito populations and possibly the risk of infections spread by mosquitoes such as West Nile Virus. Mosquito bite prevention activities should be adhered to such as wearing long pants, socks and long-sleeved shirts and by using insect repellents that contain DEET or Picardin.

(Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Emergency Preparedness and Response)

For more information:

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/pdf/recovery.pdf>

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/disease/responderimmun.asp>

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/prevention_info.htm

http://www.who.int/hac/techguidance/ems/flood_cds/en/

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/disease/>