



## What to do after the flood is over

### To the parents of children affected by floods in the Plain Community

Storms and floods can bring extraordinary changes and challenges to your community. Many have been directly affected by the flooding, while others have spent exhausting hours filling sandbags, helping with evacuations, and performing other emergency duties.

Now, as the waters recede, it is time to return home and put lives and affairs back in order. It will be a time of stress for everyone, and the difficulties you encounter can all too easily be compounded by contaminated food and water as well as health issues associated with animals and insects.

The situation will be doubly critical for children. Their routines have been upset, their homes will need cleaning, their belongings may be lost and pets may have died.

Here are some simply-written health and safety tips that you can share with your children:

## Food & drinking water safety

You may be surprised by what you find when you get back home after a flood. Water may still be standing in your yard or your house. Many of your belongings may be damaged or destroyed. There will be changes in your house, your yard, and your neighborhood. Some of those changes may hurt you, but you can learn how to be safe after the flood.

### Be careful with food.

After a flood, some food that is left in your home may not be safe to eat, especially food that was stored in your refrigerator or freezer. **Any time you don't know where food came from, throw it out.** Also throw out these foods:

- Food that may have touched flood water
- Food that was canned at home
- Bottles or jars with tops that can come off
- Open, bulging, or dented cans
- Food that rats, mice, or other animals may have touched
- Food that smells or looks funny

Not all food will be unsafe. Canned food that was not opened and was stored in places not touched by flood water will be safe to eat.

**ALWAYS WASH YOUR HANDS BEFORE EATING ANY FOOD OR PUTTING YOUR HANDS TO YOUR FACE.**

Also, be sure to wash your hands ANY time after you touch flood water. Flood water in an open sore may cause an infection if it is not cleaned and treated immediately.

## **Be careful with tap or well water.**

After a flood, water may not be safe to drink or even to use for cleaning or bathing. Tap or well water may contain germs or poisons. To make sure water is safe:

- Listen to state and local officials who will give you instructions about how to handle water for cooking, drinking, or cleaning. An adult may need to boil water for a full minute and let it cool before you can use it.
- Drink bottled water if you can
- Refill your own bottles from a place you know has safe water
- Use bottled or boiled water for cooking, cleaning, bathing, and even brushing your teeth until all health warnings are lifted.
- Never drink water that looks oily or smells funny.