



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:

Handling stress and fears

If you have left home because of a flood, you will wonder what to expect when you get back and you may feel frightened or sad or even angry. You may be worried about a pet or a friend or a relative. These feelings are normal. Here are some things that might happen to you or your parents after a flood:

- You may have bad dreams for awhile after a flood. Tell someone about them.
- You may also have frequent stomachaches, headaches, and worries that the floods could happen again. Talk to your family and friends about your worries. Teachers and other adults can help too.
- It may be hard to think at school or at home. Teachers and parents will understand.
- Adults feel sad and angry after a flood, too. They may get angry and say things they don't mean. It may hurt your feelings, but it is normal.
- You may need to go to a doctor for a checkup after the flood.

When you have sad, frightened, or angry feelings, here are things that you can do to help yourself feel better:

- Talk about your feelings with your parents, a teacher, or another adult.
- Get plenty of healthy food, exercise, and rest. It may be hard, but try to keep to a normal routine as much as possible.
- Be creative. Write a story or draw a picture about what happened to you in the flood.
- Do something that you enjoy: listen to music, sing, dance, play a game or read a book.

- **Be kind to others.** Offer to help your parents. Entertain or read to a younger brother or sister. Doing things for others can help you feel better as well.

Even though you have been through a very hard time, you need to know that you are not alone. Your parents, teachers, and other adults are working hard to return life to normal in your community. Always remember that your feelings are important and that you should share them with the adults in your life.