

*** * * Fact Sheet * * ***

Health Tips – After the Storm

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene officials remind Maryland residents about the following hurricane or disaster survival TIPS:

Time to clean up

- Clean surfaces with soap, water and disinfectant to avoid the growth of mold.
 - Be particularly careful of surfaces that may come in contact with food (i.e. counter tops);
 - Areas where children play should be carefully cleaned;
- Wash linens and clothing in hot water or dry clean;
- Air dry and spray thoroughly with a disinfectant any items that cannot be washed or dry cleaned (i.e., mattresses and furniture);
- Steam-clean all carpeting;
- Wear rubber gloves and boots when cleaning up sewage backs up; and
- Remove and discard all contaminated household materials that cannot be disinfected (i.e., rugs, wall coverings, drywall, etc.).

Immunizations

- Contact your health care provider or local health department to determine whether a tetanus booster is necessary if you have a puncture wound or a wound contaminated with feces, soil, or saliva.

Precautions when returning to your home

- Stay away from downed or dangling power lines;
- Assume all power lines are 'live';
- Report downed or dangling power lines to your power company;
- Leave your house immediately and call 911 if you smell gas or suspect a gas leak;
- Empty standing water found in or around the yard in items such as flowerpots, tires, wading pools, gutters, and water containers for pets and other wildlife;
 - Large amounts of pooled water that remain after a flood will lead to an increase in the mosquito population; and
- Avoid activity near standing water, wear long-sleeved and long-legged clothing, and use insect repellants containing DEET according to the instructions.

Sanitation and Hygiene

- Remember to practice basic hygiene;
- Wash your hands with soap and water – always;
- Keep open cuts or sores as clean as possible by washing with soap and water to control potential infections;
 - Flood waters may contain fecal matter from overflowing sewage systems and industrial byproducts;
 - There is a risk of disease from eating or drinking anything contaminated with flood water;
- Seek immediate medical attention if you have a wound that develops redness, swelling, or drainage;
- Keep children away from and do not allow them to play in flood water areas -- both to prevent drowning and other health issues;
- Wash children's hands frequently; and
- Disinfect all contaminated toys before allowing children to play with them.

###

Rev. 9-5-08