

# FLOODWATCH TIPS

## Protect Yourself Against Disease and Injury When Working in Flood-Affected Areas

### Vaccines:

Everyone should be up to date with their tetanus immunization:

- A primary series of 3 doses of tetanus-containing vaccine (usually given in the first year of life), PLUS
- A booster of tetanus-containing vaccine every 10 years for adults - there are two options:
  1. Td booster covers tetanus and diphtheria (free from Public Health and doctors' offices)
  2. Tdap (Td plus pertussis vaccine) booster is recommended instead of Td at least once for adults (buy at pharmacy)

*Anyone who will be looking after patients or expects contact with body fluids needs to have:*

- Hepatitis B vaccine series (Hepatitis B vaccine is recommended, but not provided free for health care workers. Depending on the situation, hepatitis B vaccine may be paid for by the employer. Hepatitis B vaccine is provided free for infant and school-based immunization programs and for specific high risk situations)

Flooding in BC is NOT expected to increase risk for: cholera, hepatitis A, meningococcal meningitis, rabies, typhoid, or West Nile Virus.

### Other Infectious Disease Risks and Precautions:

**Submerged or mud-covered sharp objects.** Wear waterproof safety footwear (e.g., "Green Patch" boots.) Use protective gloves and clothing and take care to avoid cuts and scrapes. Wounds should be cleaned and dressed as soon as possible.

**Protect your eyes from splashes.** Wear safety goggles.

**Insect/tick bites.** Wear long sleeved shirts and tuck pant legs into socks. Apply insect repellent to clothing and to exposed skin. Inspect your skin and the skin of your dog for ticks after travelling through brush.

**Bats and other wild animals:** Do not touch or disturb wild animals. Report any bat contacts or wild animal contacts to your local health unit.

**Clean water:** Carry supplies of clean water for drinking and washing. Hands that look at all dirty should be washed with soap and water before eating or touching your face.

**Hand sanitizer:** Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean your hands when you do not have clean water and soap for washing.

### **Other General precautions:**

**Stay out of flood-affected areas until local emergency officials have given clearance to re-enter.**

**Arrange for check-in.** Make sure someone knows where you are going, when you should be checking in and getting back, and where to look for you if you don't report in or get back.

**Carry a backpack with food and emergency gear** to see you through if you get stranded.

**Make sure you can call for help.** Carry a cell phone, two-way radio, or other way to call for help.

**Avoid sunburn.** Put sunscreen on exposed skin and wear clothing that casts a solid shadow. When in the sun, wear a hat and sunglasses.

More detailed advice at <http://www.fraserhealth.ca/HealthInfo/PublicHealth/Flood+Preparation.htm>