

# AFTER THE FLOOD: IMMUNIZATIONS

## FACT SHEET

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **there is generally no need for mass immunization programs during a flood.** Outbreaks of communicable diseases after floods are unusual. However, the **rates of diseases that were present before a flood may increase because of decreased sanitation or overcrowding among displaced persons.** Increases in infectious diseases that were not present in the community before the flood are usually not a problem.

Specific recommendations for vaccinations should be made on a case-by-case basis, or as determined by local and state health departments.

Although no specific vaccinations are recommended for flood events, public health officials recommend that everyone maintain their routine vaccinations in accordance with the CDC guidelines. **By staying up to date with vaccinations, everyone is better prepared for emergencies, such as floods.**

### Tetanus Vaccination

Tetanus is an infection caused by bacteria called *Clostridium tetani*. The bacteria are usually found in soil, dust, and manure and enter the body through breaks in the skin—usually cuts or puncture wounds caused by contaminated objects.

Tetanus cases rarely occur in persons who have had at least three or more doses of a tetanus vaccine. If you receive a puncture wound or a wound contaminated with feces, soil, or saliva, have a doctor determine whether a tetanus booster is necessary based on your individual immunization records.

### Hepatitis B Vaccination

Hepatitis B is a contagious liver disease that ranges in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a serious, lifelong illness. It results from infection with the Hepatitis B virus.

Hepatitis B vaccine is only recommended for people who will be providing direct patient care or are otherwise expected to have routine contact with other people's bodily fluids in the course of their work activities. There is no special need for Hepatitis B vaccination during a flood.



**For more information, contact CCHD's Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program at 452-0881 x310 or visit [www.cchdmt.org](http://www.cchdmt.org) or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).**