



Indiana State
Department of Health
Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts: Vaccines for Flood Victims and Workers

What are the disease risks of floods?

Outbreaks of illness after floods are not common, but diseases may increase because of dirty water, spoiled food, contact with insects, or crowded housing.

People who work in flood waters may be exposed to tetanus if they have open sores or wounds, or if they get cuts, scrapes, or deep wounds while cleaning up after a flood. If you receive a puncture wound, cut, or scrape, see your doctor. Additionally, those who engage in direct patient care may be exposed to Hepatitis B via bodily fluids.

Do I need any special shots?

- Adults should get a tetanus-diphtheria (Td) booster every 10 years. Every adult who hasn't had a tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis shot (Tdap) should have one Tdap shot in place of a regular tetanus shot to protect against whooping cough.
- Every adult should have received at least 3 doses of tetanus vaccine. Tell your doctor if you haven't had at least three tetanus shots.
- Make sure your children have regular medical check-ups and get their shots on time.
- Tetanus may be the only shot you need when cleaning up after a flood. Your doctor may also recommend Hepatitis B vaccine if you will be engaged in patient care. Other vaccines are probably not needed when flooding occurs in the United States.
- Flood disease burden may be increased in international settings. If you are traveling abroad to conduct flood relief work or experience a flood while abroad, check the [CDC Travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) site for the country you are visiting and ask your doctor about recommended vaccinations.

What should I do if I or a member of my family needs vaccines?

Call your doctor. You may also call your local health department for help.

All information presented is intended for public use. More information can be found at: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/after.asp>