

## Health Considerations for Returning to a Flooded Home

Returning home following a flood requires careful planning to ensure the safety of yourself, your family and home. Prior to reentry, check with your local building code official, law enforcement agency, or regulatory agency authorized to approve reentry.

Additional resources and information for all of the following health considerations and safety tips can be found at the Health Department website [www.sarpycasshealthdepartment.org](http://www.sarpycasshealthdepartment.org)

### Vaccinations

- Contact your healthcare provider to inquire about your immunization status.
- It is recommended that adults receive a booster for tetanus every 10 years.

### Personal Hygiene

Flood water could contain floating debris, agricultural runoff, infectious organisms, human and animal waste, and displaced animals, insects, and reptiles. To help prevent the spread of diseases that cause illness, follow these personal hygiene safety recommendations:

- It is important to wash your hands often with clean water and soap.
- Wash clothes worn during clean up in hot water with detergent and separate them from uncontaminated clothes.
- Bathe and brush teeth with clean, safe water.
- Keep wounds clean and covered.

### Water Quality

- Follow local guidance on whether your water is safe to drink.
- Public drinking water systems are monitored by DHHS. Should any system become affected by the flooding, local officials will notify impacted residents.
- If you have a private well, get your water tested before you use it. Call the Nebraska Public Health Environmental Laboratory at (402) 471-3935 or visit <http://www.nebraska.gov/dhhs/water-test-kits/private.html> to request a coliform bacteria test kit for your well water.

### Food Safety

Throw out the following if there is any chance that it has come into contact with flood water:

- Food with unusual odor, color, or texture.
- Cans or food containers that are bulging, open, or dented.
- Food not in waterproof containers or cans.
- Food in cardboard containers.
- Perishable food inside a refrigerator that has been without power for more than 4 hours.

### Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Wear appropriate personal protective clothing when working around mold and floodwaters, including long pants, long sleeves, an N-95 respirator, and protective gloves.
- Throw out any materials that cannot be cleaned.
- Wash clothing, curtains and bedding in hot, soapy water.
- Flush rugs and cloth furniture with clean water, shampoo, then dry thoroughly.
- Hard, non-porous surfaces such as metal, glass, concrete, and solid wood can be cleaned with fresh water and dried thoroughly, then disinfected with a 10% bleach solution (1 ½ cups to 1 gallon of water).