



Public Health
England



Protecting and improving the nation's health

Flooding: advice for the public

Advice on:

- planning for flooding before it happens
- what to do during a flood
- recovering and cleaning up after a flood



Top tips for staying safe during floods:

1. Think about flooding before it happens. Sign up for free flood warnings and create a personal flood plan.
2. Try to avoid contact with flood water. Do not drive through flood water and do not let children play in flood water.
3. Feeling distressed after a flood is normal. Support from family and friends is important during the recovery process.
4. Do not use petrol or diesel generators indoors to dry out your home. The exhaust gases contain carbon monoxide, which can kill.
5. When cleaning up after a flood, wear rubber gloves, boots and eye protection, and wash hands afterwards.

Floodline: 0345 988 1188

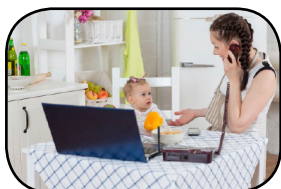
NHS '111' for non-urgent health concerns

Food Standards Agency **020 7276 8829** for food safety concerns

Think about flooding before it happens



Your **local authority** or the **Environment Agency** can tell you about the **dangers of flooding where you live**. Find out before a flood happens.



If available for your neighbourhood, **sign up for free flood warning messages** from the Environment Agency's Floodline: **0345 988 1188**.

Know what the levels of flood warning mean:



FLOOD ALERT

Flooding is possible.
Be prepared.



FLOOD WARNING

Flooding is expected.
Immediate action
required.



SEVERE FLOOD WARNING

Severe flooding.
Danger to life.



Make a personal 'flood plan' for what you will do in a flood. Advice is available from:
www.gov.uk/prepare-for-a-flood/make-a-flood-plan



Prepare your home in case there is a flood. This includes flood proofing, flood boards and airbrick covers. Advice is available from: **<http://ow.ly/GRsij>**



Buy flood insurance to protect your home and your belongings.

If a flood has been forecast



If flooding has been forecast where you live, **listen to local radio** or check:

www.gov.uk/check-if-youre-at-risk-of-flooding

If you have questions phone your local authority or
Floodline: 0345 988 1188.

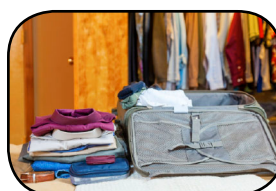
Pack a 'flood kit' in case you need to leave your home:



Phone numbers,
insurance
documents,
bank cards and
money.



Medicines and
medical devices,
hearing aid
batteries, glasses
and contact
lenses.



Clothing,
toothbrush and
personal items.



If you have a
baby, pack
nappies, clothing
and baby food.



Know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water before flood water enters your home. Phone your local suppliers if you are unsure how to do this.



Be careful not to hurt yourself when preparing your home and moving important things to a higher place.

During a flood



Accidents happen in fast flowing flood water. Avoid walking or driving in or near flood water. Driving in flood water significantly increases risk of drowning. Do not let children play in flood water.



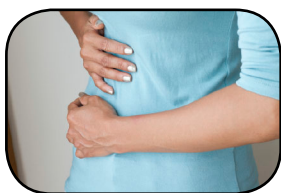
Move your family, pets and floodkit to a high place with means of escape. Stay safe, listen to the advice of the emergency services and **evacuate when told to do so.**



Do not touch sources of electricity if you are standing in water.



Remember that **flooding is stressful**. It is normal to feel anxious or upset. **Take care of yourself and your family. Check on elderly and vulnerable friends and neighbours.**



Avoid contact with flood water and **wash your hands regularly. Swallowing flood water or mud can cause diarrhoea, fever or abdominal pain.** Mention the flood if you see a doctor within 10 days for abdominal complaints.

After a flood



Take care if you must go into flood water. There could be hidden dangers like sharp objects, raised manhole covers and pollution.



Ensure good ventilation if using portable indoor heating appliances to dry out indoor spaces. **Do not use petrol or diesel generators** or other similar fuel-driven equipment indoors: the **exhaust gases contain carbon monoxide which can kill.**



Do not turn on gas or electrics if they may have got wet. Only turn them on when they have been checked by a qualified technician.



Feeling tired, anxious and having difficulty sleeping is normal after you have been flooded. **Contact friends and family for support** as it can take a long time for life to return to normal.



If you notice a **change in water quality**, such as a change in the colour, taste or smell of your tap water, phone your water company.

After a flood



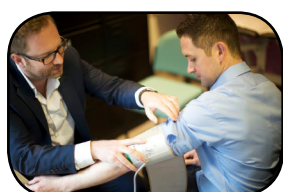
For **food safety advice** after flooding, including **how to make baby food** without mains water, contact the Food Standards Agency: **020 7276 8829**.



Do not eat food that has touched flood water. Do not eat fresh food from the fridge or freezer if your electricity has been turned off for more than four hours.



Wash your hands regularly with clean water and soap. If there is no clean water, use wet wipes or hand sanitising gel. Clean work surfaces before and after preparing food.



Make sure your family take their **medicines** and attend **scheduled medical appointments**. **Phone '111' if you have non-urgent health concerns.**



Stay with friends or family, or ask your local authority to help you **find alternative accommodation if your home has been damaged by flood water**. Only return to your home when essential repairs and cleaning have been completed.

Cleaning up after a flood



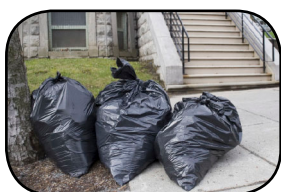
Phone your insurance company as soon as possible and follow their advice. **Take photographs** before you start cleaning and ask your insurer before discarding items that cannot be cleaned (such as mattresses and carpets).



Wear rubber boots and gloves to clean up, and be sure to wash hands afterwards. Clean all hard surfaces (such as walls and floors) with hot water and detergent. Hard surfaces contaminated by sewage need to be cleaned and disinfected.



Wash clothes used for cleaning separately from your other clothes. Wash soft items (such as clothing, bedding and children's toys) on a 60°C cycle with detergent.



Place **rubbish** in hard bins or in rubbish bags. Dispose of dead rodents and pests in a plastic bag, wearing rubber gloves.



Heating, dehumidifiers and good ventilation can help dry out your home. Mould will stop growing as your home dries out but if it persists, contact a specialist cleaner.

Useful local phone numbers

Please write your local phone numbers in the space provided below.
Make sure they are easy to find in the event of a flood.



Local authority:



Local police:



Gas and electricity company:



Insurance company and policy details:



Doctor:



Pharmacy:



Electrician:



Gas safe engineer:



Plumber:



Builder:

Public Health England is committed to producing widely accessible public materials and the format of this leaflet has been prepared in consultation with Improving Health and Lives, the Learning Disabilities Public Health Observatory.

This information leaflet has been prepared by Public Health England in collaboration with the Environment Agency (England) within the EU project Public Health Adaptation Strategies to Extreme weather events (PHASE contract number EAHC20101103).

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