



## Lexington-Fayette County Health Department

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8 a.m.

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### **Health department makes recommendations when cleaning flooded homes**

The Lexington-Fayette County Health Department reminds people to proceed with caution when dealing with floodwater in their homes.

Floodwater can affect homes by damaging materials, introducing unknown contaminants including sewage and creating dampness throughout the home. Please take the following steps during flooding:

- Keep children and pets out of the affected area until cleanup is completed.
- Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves and goggles during cleanup of affected area. Thoroughly clean all hard surfaces with hot water and laundry or dish detergent. After completing cleanup, wash your hands with soap and water. Wash clothes worn during cleanup in hot water and detergent, separately from uncontaminated clothes and linens.
- Remove and discard any item that cannot be washed and disinfected. Also, remove items that have been wet for more than 48 hours and cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried (these items can remain a source of mold growth and should be removed from the home).
- Prevent water outdoors from reentering your home. Water from gutters or the roof should drain away from the house; the ground around the house should slope away from the house to keep basements and crawl spaces dry. Ensure that crawl spaces in basements have proper draining to limit water seepage; ventilate to allow area to dry out.
- Floodwater often contains infectious organisms, including intestinal bacteria. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, muscle aches and fever. Most cases of sickness from flood conditions are caused by ingesting contaminated food or water. Tetanus, however, can be acquired from contaminated soil or water entering broken areas of the skin, such as cuts, abrasions or puncture wounds. Tetanus is an infectious disease that affects the nervous system and causes severe muscle spasms, known as lockjaw. The symptoms may appear weeks after exposure and may begin as a headache but later develop into difficulty swallowing or opening the jaw.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you become injured or ill during cleanup.

For additional information, please contact the health department at (859) 231-9791.