

Minnesota Department of Health

Volunteers in Floods and Other Disasters: No Extra Immunizations Needed

You may be surprised to know this: As a volunteer worker, you don't need special shots like tetanus or hepatitis for floods and other disasters. Diseases prevented by vaccines are uncommon in these situations. In fact, calls for mass vaccination can pull needed resources away from clean-up and rescue efforts.

Tetanus

You don't need to take time to get a tetanus shot right now if you are dealing with a flood or other disaster. Just so you know, this is when tetanus shots are due:

- Adults: Get a tetanus booster every 10 years
- Children: Get a basic series of four shots between 2 months and 18 months of age, and booster shots at 4 to 6 years of age and 11 to 12 years of age.

If you are wounded

If you get a wound, you will need to seek medical care. Follow the instructions given by your sponsor agency. Whether or not you need a tetanus shot will depend on the type of wound you have and when you last had a shot.

Hepatitis A

There is no reason for most people to get a hepatitis A shot during floods or other disasters. Hepatitis A is not a risk in floods. Even sewer workers don't need hepatitis A shots.

Hepatitis B

There is no reason for most people to get hepatitis B shots during floods or other disasters. Hepatitis B is not a risk in floods. Health care workers who come into contact

with blood and other body fluids should already be immunized.

Prevent infection during clean-up

To avoid injury and prevent infection while doing disaster clean-up, follow these steps:

- Wash your hands as often as possible using soap and water.
- Wear protective clothing to prevent injury:
 - Heavy, hard-soled shoes
 - Long-sleeved shirt and long pants
 - Heavy, waterproof, cut-resistant work gloves
 - Safety goggles
- Take care of wounds right away:

For minor wounds:

- Wash your hands first before caring for a cut
- Clean the wound with soap and water
- Pat the wound area dry and apply a clean, dry dressing.

For more serious wounds:

- Clean the dirt around the wound
- Loosely cover the wound if possible and seek medical care

Immunization questions?

- Call your local health department
- Call the CDC Immunization Hotline, 1-800-232-4636
- Visit the MDH website, www.health.state.mn.us/immunize



Immunization Program
 P.O. Box 64975
 St. Paul, MN 55164-0975
 651-201-5503, 1-800-657-3970
www.health.state.mn.us/immunize