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Tips for cleaning up after the flood

When returning to your home after a flood, cleaning up can be overwhelming. The Kane County Health Department advises residents that in addition to structural damage, flood water can contaminate both food and drinking water with bacteria, viruses and other organisms. If you become ill (e.g. nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps), report your condition to your physician. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), if you receive a puncture or severe wound while in contact with contaminated flood water, you should be evaluated immediately by a healthcare provider and receive a tetanus shot if it's been more than five (5) year since your last booster.

If your private well casing has been submerged, the water could be contaminated. Use bottled water or water previously stored in the refrigerator for drinking, brushing teeth, preparing food or baby formula until well water has been tested. The Health Department provides well testing kits free of charge to flooded private water well owners. They are available during regular business hours at the Health Department's Aurora location, 1240 N. Highland Ave., and by appointment at the Elgin location, 1750 Grandstand Place.

To protect yourself against diseases and other hazards following a flood, it is recommended residents take the following steps:

- Keeping your hands clean helps you avoid getting sick. Wash hands with soap and water. Make sure children follow these same precautions.
- Do not eat any food that has come in contact with flood water.
- If the power was out, the refrigerator will keep foods cold for about 4 hours (if door remained closed); a full freezer – 2 days. A good rule of thumb – *when in doubt, throw it out.*
- Keep children and pets out of the affected area until cleanup has been completed.
- To reduce your risk of injury, wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles during cleanup of affected area.
- Remove and discard items that cannot be washed and disinfected (such as, mattresses, carpeting, carpet padding, rugs, upholstered furniture, cosmetics, stuffed animals, baby toys, pillows, foam-rubber items, books, wall coverings, and most paper products).

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- Remove and discard drywall and insulation that has been contaminated with sewage or flood waters.
- Thoroughly clean all hard surfaces (such as flooring, concrete, molding, wood and metal furniture, countertops, appliances, sinks, and other plumbing fixtures) with hot water and laundry or dish detergent.
- Help the drying process by using fans, air conditioning units, and dehumidifiers.

The Kane County Office of Emergency Management has a supply of Red Cross clean up supplies for distribution to those within our communities who are working to recover from the recent flooding. The following is a list of available supplies:

- Flood cleanup kits
- Shovels
- Rakes
- Tarps
- Work Gloves
- Dust Masks
- Flashlights
- Ice Coolers

For more information on obtaining the clean up supplies, please call the Office of Emergency Management at (630) 232-5985. Details on clean-up and disinfection are available from The Illinois Department of Public Health at www.idph.state.il.us/floodinfo/index.htm. Additional information about cleaning up after a flood is available by calling the Environmental Health Division at (630) 444-3040 or by visiting our website at www.kanehealth.com.

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