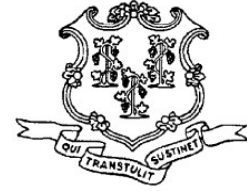


News



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DPH: Severe Flooding Could Lead to Drinking Water and Sewage Concerns

Hartford – The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) is warning residents of health concerns associated with flood water and that severe flooding has the potential to contaminate drinking water sources and lead to sewage back-ups in homes.

With record flooding predicted in the state from Hurricane Sandy, DPH is advising residents to assume that all flood water is contaminated and to avoid contact with any flood water.

Flood Water

Flood water may contain viruses, bacteria and germs which could lead to severe illness. All food and water that has come into contact with flood water should be considered contaminated and discarded. This includes packaged food items in plastic, paper, cardboard, cloth, and similar containers that may have been water damaged, as well as beverage containers with screw-caps, snap lids, crimped caps (soda bottles), twist caps, flip tops, and home canned foods, as these tops cannot be disinfected appropriately. For information on cleanup after a flood, go to www.ct.gov/dph/floods.

Drinking Water

With unprecedented tidal surge anticipated, some public water systems may be compromised. Listen for water reports from your public water supplier or local authorities to find out if your water is safe. If an advisory has been issued concerning contaminated water, or if you notice any unusual changes to the water (color, taste or odor), precautionary measures, such as using boiled or bottled water, should be taken until you are advised otherwise.

Homeowners in flooded areas whose private wells have flooded should consider their wells contaminated. Contaminated wells should be disinfected before use. If you notice any unusual changes to the water (color, taste or odor), precautionary measures, such as using boiled or bottled water, should be taken until testing is done to find if contamination is present in the water supply. For information on disinfecting wells, go to www.ct.gov/dph/floods.

If there is a boil water notice or advisory, or if you suspect that your water supply is contaminated, boiled or bottled water should be used when cooking, washing fruits and vegetables, brushing teeth, or making baby formula. You should also use boiled or bottled water to wash your hands when cooking. Adults and older children do not need to use boiled water to shower or bathe, but should try not to swallow or get any untreated water into their mouth. *Infants, toddlers, the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems should be bathed using boiled or bottled water.*

You can safely boil your water by bringing it to a rolling boil for one minute. A rolling boil means that there are very large bubbles in the water, making the water move very quickly. Make sure the water does not have any floating pieces in it before you boil it.

Sewage

Flooding can cause sewage back-ups into basements and onto private property. Sewage contains bacteria, viruses, and other germs that can cause disease and make a contaminated house unfit for living. Your health may be impacted if a sewage back-up occurs in your home. Sewage back-ups can also contaminate your private drinking well water.

If you have a sewage back-up in your home:

- Turn off the power if there is standing water or the possibility of electrical wires coming into contact with water or wet materials.
- Do not flush the toilets.
- Keep all children and pets away from the sewage.
- Wear rubber gloves when handling anything contaminated with sewage. Wash hands immediately afterwards. Never touch raw sewage with bare hands.
- If your home is served by a municipal sewer system, call your local sewer department (town public works department or water pollution control authority) or go to their website.
- If your home has a septic system, call your local health department for advice about how to dispose of the water/sewage.

For more information on what to do if you have a sewage back-up in your home and cleanup after a flood, go to www.ct.gov/dph/floods.

For updated information on Hurricane Sandy, go to www.ct.gov/sandy.

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