Returning Home After a Hurricane: Be Healthy and Safe

Serious disease outbreaks have not occurred in hurricane-affected areas, but you should still be careful of getting sick or hurt.

• Do not enter a building if you smell gas. Call 911. Do not light a match or turn on lights.
• Wear waterproof boots and gloves to avoid floodwater touching your skin.
• Wash your hands often with soap and clean water, or use a hand-cleaning gel with alcohol in it.
• Avoid tetanus and other infections by getting medical attention for a dirty cut or deep puncture wound.

Clean Your Home an d Stop Mold

• Take out items that have soaked up water and that cannot be cleaned and dried.
• Fix water leaks. Use fans and dehumidifiers and open doors and windows to remove moisture.
• To remove mold, mix 1 cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water, wash the item with the bleach mixture, scrub rough surfaces with a stiff brush, rinse the item with clean water, then dry it or leave it to dry. • Check and clean heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning systems before use.
• To clean hard surfaces that do not soak up water and that may have been in contact with floodwater, first wash with soap and clean water. Next disinfect with a mixture of 1 cup of bleach in 5 gallons of water. Then allow to air dry.
• Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles when cleaning with bleach. Open windows and doors to get fresh air. Never mix bleach and ammonia. The fumes from the mixture could kill you.

Protect Yourself from Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Do not use generators, pressure washers, charcoal grills, camp stoves, or other fuel-burning devices indoors or in enclosed or partially enclosed areas such as garages, even with doors or windows open. Do not put these devices outside near an open door, window, or air vent. You could be poisoned or killed by carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless gas from burning fuel such as gasoline, charcoal, or propane.

Keep Drinking Water and Food Safe

• Listen to public announcements to find out if local tap water is safe for drinking, cooking, cleaning, or bathing. Until the water is safe, use bottled water or boil or disinfect water.
• If a "boil water" advisory is in effect, do not drink tap water or use it to brush your teeth unless water has come to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute.
• Do not eat food that smells bad, looks bad, or has touched floodwater. When in doubt, throw food out.

Prevent Electrical Injuries

• Do not touch fallen electrical wires. They may be live and could hurt or kill you.
• Turn off the electrical power at the main source if there is standing water. Do not turn on power or use an electric tool or appliance while standing in water.

Avoid Contact with Animals and Insects

• Reduce mosquito bites. Consider avoiding outdoor activities during the evening and early morning, which are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Use an insect repellent with DEET or Picaridin.
• Stay away from wild or stray animals. Stray dogs may be hurt or afraid and may bite. Call local authorities to handle animals.
• Get rid of dead animals according to local guidelines.

Drive Safely

• Stop and look both ways at all intersections. Most street lights are not working. Drive slowly and keep space between you and other
vehicles. Watch out for trash on the road.
• Wear your seatbelt.
• Do not drive if you have been drinking.