

STAYING SAFE AFTER A FLOOD



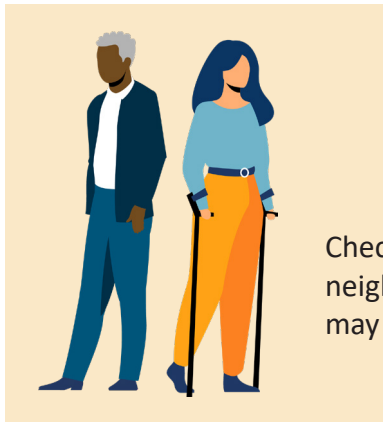
Floods can create conditions that are harmful to both your physical and mental health. This fact sheet explains health risks after a flood and ways you can protect the health of your family and community during the recovery process.

This is the third fact sheet in the “Flooding and Safety” series. The other two are:

- [Preparing for Floods: Manage Stress and Increase Safety \(URL: bit.ly/Prepare-Floods\)](https://bit.ly/Prepare-Floods)
- [Staying Safe During a Flood \(URL: bit.ly/During-Floods\)](https://bit.ly/During-Floods)

Flood-related Hazard	Floodwaters	Damaged or flooded drinking water source	Power outages
Common threats to health and safety after a flood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hidden dangers, such as human and animal waste, trash, toxic chemicals, hazardous waste, downed power lines, and other debris. • Drowning when trying to walk or swim through floodwaters. • Flooded roadways cause car crashes or sweep cars away. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contamination from damaged public water supplies and private residential wells. • Polluted drinking water supplies that cause diarrhea and other kinds of sickness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon monoxide poisoning from improper generator use.
What to do to stay safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay out of floodwaters. • If you must wade through or touch floodwaters, wash with soap and clean water as soon as possible. • Take care of wounds as soon as possible. • Do not drive into floodwaters. Turn around, don't drown! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test private wells. Visit MDHHS Water Testing for more information about testing in Michigan (URL: bit.ly/MDHHSWaterTest). • Follow guidance at Disinfecting Wells After a Disaster. (URL: cdc.gov/water-emergency). • If on city water, check for boil water advisories. • Do not drink floodwater, or use it to wash dishes, brush teeth, or wash and prepare food. Drink clean, safe water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never use a generator inside your home or garage. • Generators should be at least 20 feet from any door, window, or vent.

Help Others



Check in on elderly neighbors and people that may need help cleaning up.

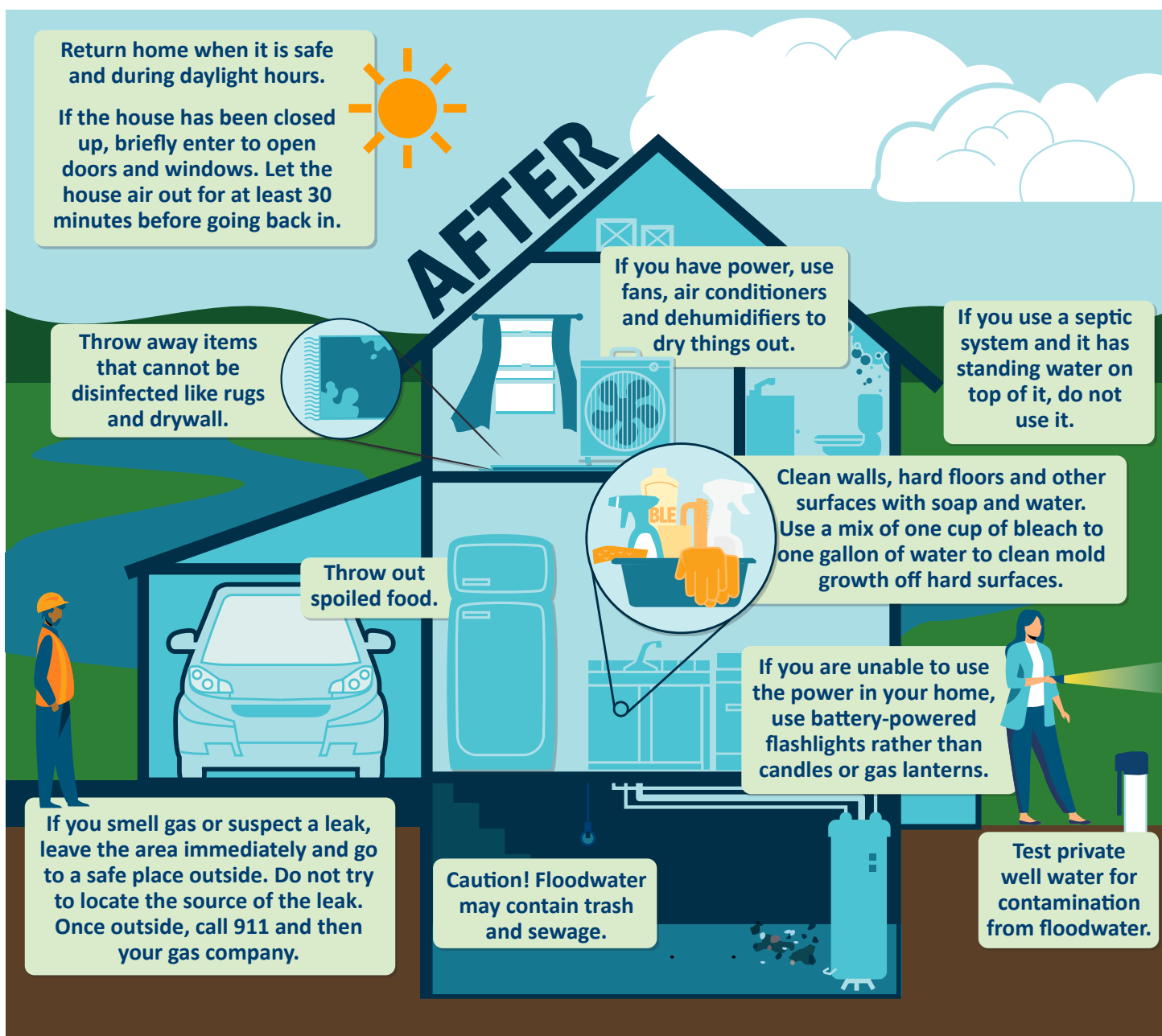
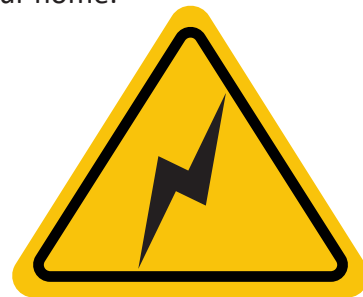


Those who rely on electricity to refrigerate medication or for medical equipment may also need help.

Returning home safely

Use caution when reentering a home or building that has been flooded. **Do not turn power on or off or use electric tools or appliances while standing in water. Have an electrician check the house's electrical system before turning the power on again.** Before reentering your home:

1. **Make a plan for reentering the house and what to prioritize.** How will you avoid potential hazards? Did water get into the heating and cooling system? Do you have clothing that will protect you, such as rubber boots, a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, eye protection and an N95 mask?
2. **Make sure the house is safe.** Is the house stable? Is the power off? Is the gas off? How might the house be contaminated with chemicals or dirty water? Has a drinking water advisory been issued?
3. **Remove water, debris, trash and items that are damaged beyond repair.** Throw away items that cannot be disinfected with bleach and dried quickly, like mattresses, carpeting, pillows and upholstered furniture.



Know your state, local and federal resources

[Local Weather Forecast Offices](#) (WFOs) (URL: [Weather.gov/srh/nwsoffices](https://www.weather.gov/srh/nwsoffices)) of the [National Weather Service](#) (URL: [Weather.gov](https://www.weather.gov)) issue advisories and warnings.

Stay Informed



Flood Advisory: Be Aware. Issued when flooding is expected to cause inconvenience, but not expected to be threatening to life or property. Could be minor flooding of low-lying areas and streets.

Flood Watch: Be Prepared. Issued when conditions are favorable for rapid flooding. It means it is possible that flooding will occur.

Flood Warning: Take Action! Issued when flooding is occurring or imminent.

Flash Flood Warning: Take Action! Issued when a flash flood is occurring or imminent. If you live in a flood prone area, move to higher ground. A flash flood is a sudden, violent flood and may even occur in areas not receiving rain.

Get alerts

- Learn about your community's emergency plans, warning signals, evacuation routes, and locations of emergency shelters. Visit [211-Michigan](#) (URL: [Mi211.org](https://www.mi211.org)) or call your local health department to find out more about emergency planning in your area.

Explore Michigan data

- Visit the [MiTracking Program site](#) (URL: [Michigan.gov/mitracking](https://www.michigan.gov/mitracking)) and select the "Explore Data" button for Michigan data on how precipitation (e.g., rain, snow) is changing. For precipitation data, select the "Environment" category, "Climate Change" content area, and "Extreme Precipitation" indicator.
- Visit the [Michigan Climate and Health Adaptation Program \(MICHAP\)](#) (URL: [Michigan.gov/climateandhealth](https://www.michigan.gov/climateandhealth)) to find more about how extreme weather events like flooding can impact human health.

More resources

- [Coping with Disaster](#) (URL: [Mhanational.org/coping-disaster](https://www.mhanational.org/coping-disaster)).
- [Michigan State Police MIREADY Program](#) (URL: [Michigan.gov/miready](https://www.michigan.gov/miready)).
- [Michigan Prepares: Floods](#) (URL: [Michigan.gov/michiganprepares/be-informed/floods](https://www.michigan.gov/michiganprepares/be-informed/floods)).
- [Septic Systems: Hurricanes and Flooding](#) (URL: [neha.org/flooding-guidance](https://www.neha.org/flooding-guidance)).

References

1. NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information. (2022). *State Climate Summaries-Michigan*. Retrieved from <https://statesummaries.ncics.org/chapter/mi/>.
2. CDC. (n.d.). *Floods and Your Safety*. <https://www.cdc.gov/floods/about/>.

Questions about this fact sheet? Call 800-648-6942.

Prepared by the [Michigan Climate and Health Adaptation Program \(MICHAP\)](#)

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