Floods: Sanitation and Hygiene

- It is critical for you to remember to practice basic hygiene during the emergency period. Always wash your hands with soap and water that has been boiled or disinfected:
    - before preparing or eating food;
    - after toilet use;
    - after participating in flood cleanup activities; and
    - after handling articles contaminated with flood water or sewage.

- Flood waters may contain fecal material from overflowing sewage systems, and agricultural and industrial byproducts.
- Although skin contact with flood water does not, by itself, pose a serious health risk, there is some risk of disease from eating or drinking anything contaminated with flood water.
- If you have any open cuts or sores that will be exposed to flood water, keep them as clean as possible by washing well with soap to control infection. If a wound develops redness, swelling, or drainage, seek immediate medical attention.
- In addition, parents need to help children avoid waterborne illness. Do not allow children to play in flood water areas, wash children's hands frequently (always before meals), and do not allow children to play with flood-water contaminated toys that have not been disinfected. You can disinfect toys using a solution of one cup of bleach in 5 gallons of water.
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See Also…

Cleaning and Sanitizing With Bleach After an Emergency
(http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/bleach.asp)
Follow steps in this table to clean and sanitize with bleach…

Hand Hygiene After a Disaster
(http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/handhygiene.asp)
When to wash your hands & how to do it without running water…

After a Hurricane or Flood: Cleanup of Flood Water
(http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/cleanupwater.asp)
Flood water may contain sewage, protect yourself and your family by following these steps

For more information, visit www.health.pa.gov or www.emergency.cdc.gov.