

  
**COUNTY OF BERGEN**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES**  
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**Dennis McNerney**  
County Executive

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Director/Health Officer

### **Individual Infection Control After The Flood**

It is always recommended that you should wear plastic or rubber gloves, boots, and other protective clothing needed to avoid contact with floodwater before entering a contaminated area which has been flooded,

Before working in flooded areas, be sure your tetanus shot is current (given within the last 10 years).

Recommendations regarding exposure:

1. If you were exposed to floodwater, consult healthcare provider if you have experienced a cut, scratch or puncture wound.
2. If you have swallowed floodwater, consult a healthcare provider should you experience nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, muscle aches, and fever.
3. If your last known tetanus vaccine was more than 10 years ago, consult your healthcare provider to discuss getting a tetanus booster.

The Bergen County Department of Health Services (BCDHS) recommends the administration of tetanus shots on a case-by-case basis as determined by a physician.

However, if a contracting municipality makes the decision to provide and administer tetanus (Td) vaccine to their local emergency responders and requests additional nursing staff from Bergen County Department of Health Services, the following criteria must be met:

1. Municipal nurse or a nursing agency, when in place, should be utilized and exhausted prior to the request for additional staff.
2. Physician prescription and or standing orders must be available and on site
3. Protocol, procedures and equipment to provide initial emergency care are available for the program.
4. Individual consent forms are on site

Most cases of sickness associated with flood conditions are brought about by ingesting contaminated food or water. The symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, muscle aches, and fever.

Tetanus can be acquired from contaminated soil or **water entering broken areas of the skin, such as cuts, scratches, or puncture wounds**. Tetanus is an infectious disease that affects the nervous system and causes severe muscle spasms, known as lockjaw. The symptoms may appear weeks after exposure and may begin as a headache, but later develop into difficulty swallowing or opening the jaw.

**If you get a deep or dirty cut or a puncture wound and it has been 5 years or more since your last tetanus shot**, see a doctor so they can determine whether a tetanus booster is needed. Wounds that are associated with a flood should be evaluated for tetanus risk; a physician may recommend a tetanus immunization.

Should you have other questions please contact:

BCDHS Public Health Nurses

Elaine Rizzo 201-634-2647

Nancy Mangieri 201-634-2655

Renee McCue 201-634-2657

BCDHS Epidemiologist

Somini John, 201-634-2842.

Reference: <http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/floodCleanup.html>

NJSDHSS provided vaccine purchase information:

Sanofi Pasteur [www.us.aventispasteur.com](http://www.us.aventispasteur.com)

Telephone: 1-800-822-2463

Decavac Td \$191.40 (10 doses)

An account needs to be opened and after the account is established  
hrs.