

# *Vernon County Health Department*

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Public Health  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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## **TIPS FOR COPING WITH FLOODS**

The Vernon County Health Department is urging residents that experienced recent flooding to take precautions to protect their health.

The Vernon County Health Department recommends that if you have a private well that has been submerged by flood waters, **do not drink the water**. Wait until the waters recede, disinfect your well, and then sample the well for bacteria.

Sample kits may be obtained from the Vernon County Health Department at 318 Fairlane Drive (Co Hwy BB) Viroqua, WI, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and at other sites affected in Vernon County. If samples come back as having unsafe levels of bacteria present, it is recommended that the well be disinfected again and then re-sampled. Information on how to perform well sanitizing and sampling can be obtained from the Department of Natural Resources web site at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/flood.htm> .

Below are some additional tips for homeowners when cleaning and repairing their flood-damaged homes:

- Carpeting, drywall and other building materials affected by flood waters will in most instances need to be removed and discarded. **ANY POROUS MATERIALS THAT CAN NOT BE DRIED IN 48 HOURS SHOULD BE DISCARDED.**
- A 20-page booklet and a poster (in Spanish and English) are available online from the EPA that gives simple instructions for safely cleaning your home after a flood. It can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/flood/index.html>
- Do not rush to replace drywall and carpeting. The home must be thoroughly dried before installing new materials.
- Using dehumidifiers and fans can hasten this process. Weather permitting, open windows to further assist with the ventilation and drying of basements, crawl spaces and living areas.
- Walls typically need several days to dry and floors may take several weeks. It may make sense to remove wet sub flooring.
- If using a portable generator, keep it outside and far away from the building. The exhaust or fumes from a portable generator could kill you in minutes if you breathe it in.

- Remember to protect yourself while cleaning. Wear work boots, eye and hand protection and, if working with mold, respiratory protection.
- If you're not sure when you had your last tetanus immunization please contact the Vernon County Health Department at (608) 637-5251.

Do not swim in flood waters as flood water can have dangerous currents or cause illness. Water also increases the risk of electrical shock or other injuries as physical hazards may be hidden.

If you have questions or concerns about flood-related issues, contact the Vernon County Health Department at (608) 637-5251.

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