



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Staying Healthy After Flooding**

Summit County, OH – Recent heavy rain has produced significant flooding throughout Summit County and the region. It is important to protect yourself from exposure to floodwater because the water is likely contaminated. The best way to protect yourself is to *stay out of the water*. Keep children and pets from playing in floodwater. Summit County Public Health (SCPH) wants residents to stay healthy after flooding by observing the following tips about floodwater.

#### **Stay Out of Floodwater!**

Floodwaters contain many things that may harm health. We don't know exactly what is in floodwater at any given point in time. Floodwater can contain:

- Downed power lines
- Human and livestock waste
- Household, medical, and industrial hazardous waste (chemical, biological, and radiological)
- Coal ash waste that can contain carcinogenic compounds such as arsenic, chromium, and mercury
- Other contaminants that can lead to illness
- Physical objects such as lumber, vehicles, glass, metal fragments and debris
- Wild or stray animals such as rodents and snakes

#### **Exposure to contaminated floodwater can cause:**

- Wound infections
- Skin rash
- Gastrointestinal illness
- Tetanus

**If you come in contact with floodwater:**

- If you must enter floodwater wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles to prevent injuries.
- Wash exposed areas with soap and clean water as soon as possible. If you don't have soap or water, use alcohol-based wipes or sanitizer.
- Take care of wounds and seek medical attention if necessary.
- Wash clothes contaminated with flood or sewage water in hot water and detergent before reusing them.
- If you receive a puncture wound or a wound contaminated with feces, soil, or saliva, have a health care professional determine whether a tetanus booster is necessary based on individual records.
- Prompt first aid can help heal small wounds and prevent infection.

There are many concerns for residents and businesses after a flood. Flooded drinking water wells, mold growth and mosquitos are all common concerns. SCPH has a page of flood related resources available with more information at [www.scpd.org/flooding](http://www.scpd.org/flooding).

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