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After a Flood ... Make Sure Your Water Is Safe

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Extension Extra

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After a Flood . . .

Make Sure Your Water Is Safe

After a major storm you must assume that all water sources are contaminated until proven safe. Purify all water used for drinking, cooking, and for washing eating and cooking utensils. Also purify the water used for washing hands, body, and kitchen and bathroom surfaces.

Tips

- Do not use water that has a dark color, an odor, or contains floating material.
- To disinfect water, use one of the following methods:
 1. Boil at a rolling boil for 10 minutes.
 2. Add 8 drops of liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Make sure the bleach has no active ingredient other than 4 to 6 percent sodium hypochlorite.
 3. Add 20 drops of two percent iodine per

gallon of clear water or 40 drops per gallon of cloudy water.

4. Add water purification tablets according to directions on the package. These tablets can be bought at most drug and sporting goods stores.

Thoroughly mix these solutions and let the water stand for at least 30 minutes before using. To lessen the flat taste of boiled water, pour the water back and forth several times between two clean containers.

- Always use clean or purified water to wash any parts of the body that have come in contact with surfaces contaminated by flood waters.
- Water in water pipes and toilet flush tanks (not bowls) is safe to drink if the valve on the main water line was closed before the flood.

Adapted from the Cooperative Extension Service, Clemson University



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