



**McHenry County
Department of Health**

2200 N. Seminary Avenue, Woodstock IL 60098

Phone 815-334-4510 Fax 815-334-4635

www.mcdh.info

www.twitter.com/mchenrycohealth

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 14, 2010

Contact: Debra Quackenbush

815-334-4456; cell 815-236-3238

Health Department Cautions Residents of Floodwater Dangers

WOODSTOCK IL – With the recent heavy rains, McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) cautions residents of the dangers of floodwater contaminated with bacteria, viruses and other organisms. Common waterborne illness symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal cramps. Seek immediate medical attention if symptoms persist. Parents should also restrict children from swimming or playing in flood waters. Persons who come in contact with floodwater should make sure their tetanus shots are up to date (within the last 10 years).

If your private well casing has been submerged, the water could be contaminated. To reduce the risk of illness, water from these wells should not be consumed until tests confirm it is clear of coliform bacteria. Bottled water is recommended for drinking, preparing food or baby formula or brushing teeth. If coliform bacteria is present, the well will need to be disinfected. MCDH will perform testing at no charge for flooded private water wells after flood waters have receded.

Cleaning up after a flood can be overwhelming. To prevent the spread of disease, always wash your hands thoroughly with plenty of warm water and soap before handling, preparing or eating food. Be sure to disinfect any food preparation surfaces that may have been contaminated by floodwater. Any food or beverage containers should also be carefully examined. Flooded indoor areas (walls, floors, etc.) must be scrubbed with warm, soapy water. Wash all linens and clothing in hot water or dry clean. If there is sewage backup in the basement, it can be disposed of by pumping it into the toilet or floor drains if the drains are connected to the sewer system. Do not pump sewage-contaminated water into the yard or into the street. More details on clean up and disinfection of buildings is available at www.mcdh.info, link to Environmental Health.

For more information about floodwater clean-up and recovery, call the Department's Environmental Health Division at 815-334-4585.

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“Working to prevent disease and promote health and safety for all people of McHenry County since 1966.”