



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

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CAUTION ADVISED EVEN AFTER FLOOD WATERS RECEDE

MADISON—State health officials are urging Wisconsin residents who live in flooded areas to be cautious even after the water begins to recede.

“Residents should avoid entering flood waters because they may contain raw sewage if septic tanks have gotten overwhelmed by high rain levels,” said Dr. Henry Anderson, State Health Officer. “And, while it is a relief to get to a point where cleanup can begin after a flood, be aware of risks such as mold, food and water contamination, and the stress that a flood’s aftermath can bring,” according to Dr. Henry Anderson, State Health Officer.

“Flood water damage can lead to mold growth and other problems. Within a few days you may see or smell mold, but sometimes problems take longer to show up,” Anderson said. “If you have had water damage from a flood in your home, the best advice is to talk to a professional cleaning service with flood cleanup experience who can tell you how serious the problem is and the safest way to get rid of it.”

After flood waters recede, residents with wells that were submerged are advised to have the well checked. Well water should be sampled for coliform bacteria, whose presence indicates contamination and requires disinfection of the well and water system.

Health officials also recommend that residents throw out any food that has been touched by flood water, even if it was stored in waterproof containers. Refrigerated and frozen foods should also be inspected, especially if there was a power outage. Check the smell and appearance of all meats, seafood, milk, produce and leftovers, and “when in doubt, throw it out.”

For more information about flood hazards and recovery, visit: <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/flood/index.htm>

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