



## Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency

*Healthy People, Healthy Communities*

**Tammy Moss Chandler, Director**

Anne Molgaard, Chief Operations Officer

Trey Strickland, Director of Environmental Health



# Press Release

*Not for op-ed*

---

Date: February 28, 2019

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Ashley Toxqui

Phone: 707-463-7905

Email: [toxquia@mendocinocounty.org](mailto:toxquia@mendocinocounty.org)

## February 2019 Flooding: Direction from Environmental Health

Mendocino County has received a significant amount of rain in a relatively short period, causing localized flooding in low-lying areas along the Russian and Navarro Rivers. Floodwaters may contain human fecal material, livestock manure, and other hazardous materials and should be approached with caution.

The floodwaters will leave a mess behind them, and most people will want to clean up their property and repair their homes as soon as possible. Some simple precautions can help protect your health and safety as you do so. **Here are some tips to stay safe as the floodwaters recede:**

- Water that is contaminated may cause gastrointestinal illnesses when ingested, with symptoms including vomiting, diarrhea or nausea. **Avoid any contact with floodwater** due to the potential for high bacteria levels, particularly if you have any open cuts or sores. If exposed, you should wash thoroughly with soap to remove any potential contaminants, and apply antibiotic ointment to any wounds to discourage infection.
- **If you suspect your drinking water has been impacted, your best options are using bottled water** or bringing your water to a rolling boil for one minute before cooling off and ingesting. Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, prepare food, make ice, brush teeth, or make baby formula.

- If floodwaters reached your water well or covered the top of your well casing, assume your well may be contaminated. **You can sample your well water for Total Coliform and E. coli through Alpha Analytical Labs in Ukiah if you believe your well may be impacted, and you can contact Mendocino County Environmental Health at (707) 234-6625 for information regarding water well disinfection.**
- **Do not eat foods that have come into contact with floodwaters. Throw away food that cannot be kept cold due to lack of power.**
- **Do not use a generator, pressure washer, charcoal grill, camp stove, or any other gasoline or charcoal-burning device inside your home, garage, or near a window, door, or vent.** Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas. If carbon monoxide poisoning is suspected, seek fresh air and consult with a health care professional immediately.
- **If there is standing water in your home, never turn power on or off yourself- contact an electrician.**
- **Remove mold by washing with soap and water and letting surfaces dry completely.** Some materials such as moldy clothing, ceiling tiles, and sheet rock may need to be replaced. If mold-related illness is suspected, consult a health care professional.
- **Remember to frequently wash your hands with soap and clean water!** If clean water is not available, use hand sanitizer. Wash your hands often, especially before preparing food, before eating, after using the restroom, and after any cleanup activities. Washing your hands will help prevent illness.

**The Mendocino County Public Health Department will continue to monitor the situation in order to help protect our community's health. Please contact Environmental Health at (707) 234-6625 with any problems or questions.**

**###**