

Immunization Recommendations During Natural Disasters (Floods and Tornadoes)

People commonly ask about the risk of tetanus and hepatitis during natural disasters including floods and tornadoes. Increases in cases of tetanus and hepatitis have not been associated with these types of natural disasters. However, these events serve as a good reminder for individuals to check their immunization record. Tetanus and hepatitis immunizations are part of the routinely recommended vaccine schedules for children and adults.

Tetanus

People are at risk for tetanus infection when they are injured and have wounds that are contaminated by the environment. Natural disasters are not shown to increase the risk for tetanus disease. However, cleaning up after these events may increase your risk of getting a wound. Risk of tetanus disease depends on the type and condition of the wound and immune status of the patient. Any time you receive a wound, ask your healthcare provider if you need a tetanus-containing vaccine to protect you from disease.

- Adults should receive a booster dose of tetanus, diphtheria-containing vaccine every 10 years. Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) vaccine is routinely recommended as it also protects against whooping cough, which causes illness every year in Iowa.
 - For patients with a wound: If the last dose of a tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine was received 5 or more years earlier, a booster dose of an age-appropriate tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine may be recommended.
- Children need a basic series of four doses of vaccine between 2 and 18 months of age, as well as booster doses at 4 to 6 years and 11 to 12 years of age.

Hepatitis A/Hepatitis B

Hepatitis immunizations are recommended for some people based on age, behavioral, occupational, medical and other risk factors. Hepatitis risk is **not** increased due to exposure to flood waters or cleanup following tornadoes.

Individuals should contact their health care provider to discuss the need for vaccination.

For additional immunization questions contact:

- Healthcare provider
- Local public health department
- Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Immunization Program at 1-800-831-6293, or visit the Program webpage at <https://hhs.iowa.gov/public-health/immunization>.