



NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Emphasizes That Extra Immunizations Are Not Required During Flooding

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) is notifying North Dakotans that extra immunizations, such as hepatitis A and tetanus, and extraordinary efforts to provide vaccines are not needed during flooding.

“The perceived increased risk for tetanus and hepatitis A is probably one of the most common misperceptions regarding flooding,” said Molly Sander, Immunization Program manager for the North Dakota Department of Health. “People exposed to flood waters are not at any increased risk just because of the water. People are always at risk for tetanus when they have a cut or puncture wound and are not up-to-date on their vaccinations.”

Resources may be more appropriately focused in immediate flood response needs, such as evacuation and protection of property. Also, health-care providers responding to floods often have other priorities. Community priorities such as limiting traffic, including travel for immunizations, also need to be considered.

“As the immediate response to flooding slows down, and travel in cities like Minot become easier and safer, people can then make an effort to get up-to-date on immunizations,” said Sander. “Keeping up-to-date on immunizations is important, but getting vaccinated against tetanus or hepatitis A because of flooding is not an immediate emergency.”

If wounded, the Department of Health recommends the following advice:

- If the wound is severe, people should see a health-care provider.
- Wash your hands first before caring for the wound.
- Clean the wound with soap and water.
- Pat the wound area dry and apply a clean, dry dressing.
- Check with your doctor or clinic, or the State Health Department to see if you need a tetanus shot.

The North Dakota Department of Health has a statewide database of immunizations. The database was started in the mid 90's and contains mostly childhood immunizations. If people are interested in finding out if their immunization history is in the database, they can contact 1.866.207.2880. If people are unable to find their immunization history, it should be assumed that they are unvaccinated and they should be vaccinated when flood water recedes.

For more information about immunizations, contact Molly Sander, North Dakota Department of Health, at 1.800.472.2180, or visit our website at www.ndhealth.gov/immunize.

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