

More information on flood clean-up

Columbia Health District advises that the most important information to keep in mind is that all flood water may be contaminated with bacteria from a variety of sources, including fecal material from septic systems. In addition, the ground where flood water has receded may also be contaminated. The bacteria can cause illness.

You can get illness from:

1. Directly ingesting flood water;
2. Transferring bacteria from your hands to your eyes;
3. Transferring bacteria from your boots or gloves to your hands and to your eyes or mouth.
4. Exposing an open wound to the flood water;
5. Transferring bacteria from your hands to food you are eating.

To avoid illness from contaminated flood water:

- use soap and water to wash everything that comes in contact with flood water or areas where flood water has receded;
- Use waterproof gloves during flood cleanup and check them regularly for cuts and tears.
- Wear eye protection.
- Wear watertight boots.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or with a weak bleach solution (1/4 teaspoon of household bleach per gallon of water). Never mix bleach and ammonia or other household cleaners because it can produce dangerous toxic fumes.

• Wash dishes in clean water or rinse in the weak bleach solution.

Salvage and cleaning of flood damaged clothing and fabrics:

- Dry fabrics as soon as possible to keep mold and mildew from growing
- stuffed furniture, carpets, carpet pads, rugs and other very thick or dense material probably cannot be salvaged.
- Clothing or other lightweight fabric materials that can be home laundered or washed manually may be adequately washed and sanitized by conventional laundering process.

Food protection and salvage:

- The only flood-damaged foods that are entirely safe to salvage are those in sealed



commercial cans. Such cans can be washed in warm water and detergent and sanitized by placing the washed cans in a solution of household bleach made by adding one to two teaspoons of bleach to one gallon of clean water.

- Contaminated labels should be removed and should be relabeled with markable tape
- Food in any type of screw-top, corked, foiled or other closures are not cleanable.
- Containers opened before flood damage should not be salvaged.
- Leaking or bulging containers should also be discarded.
- Whole fruits and vegetables can be washed and sanitized as described above for sealed cans. They should be washed, sanitized and cooked.

Cleaning up your home:

- All hard surfaces should be vigorously washed with water and conventional household cleaners and disinfected by

swabbing with a bleach solution mixed at one to two teaspoons of bleach per gallon of clean water.

- All sinks, counters, food preparation equipment, cooking utensils, dishes, cups and flatware should be thoroughly washed and sanitized before use with one to two teaspoons of bleach per gallon of clean water.

Protect yourself from mold:

- People with asthma, allergies or other breathing conditions may be more sensitive to mold. Even dead mold can cause allergic reactions in some people.
- Drying out the flood damaged area is the best protection against mold.
- Mold growth is likely in porous non-cleanable items including leather, paper, insulation.
- Mold growth can be prevented by cleaning wet items and surfaces with detergent and water.

Bits & Bites

By Jacqueline Ramsay



Editor's Note: This column was written before the Dec. 3 storm.

It seems a bit early this year for me to revert to my youth time job of "check the oil in the lamps, clean or clip the wicks (dear, it's your turn this time)." At that time (the '30s in Bonneville) we had Coleman lanterns with 'mitten' wicks and if you shattered one of those – "Big Trouble," especially so if there was no 'extra' one in the box. Sound familiar? Well, all four of mine are checked and ready. It may be a stinky winter.

How was your no heat, no lights day? I went visiting where there was a woodstove for heat and cooking. Thank you, Father, for friends. When I returned home I had lights but no heat. I assumed the wind had extinguished my pilot light – no help available until next a.m. (I could cook, had matches, when the lights were out). Larry came, bless his sweet spirit – he was busy helping other "no heat" folks. Problem – if your furnace is running when

the lights go out, the brain in your furnace says it's too hot and throws a safety switch. I also found out that "other" switch will let you run your fan "only" in the summer. It seems there is a break in the chain of information at the time of purchase – salesperson tells and shows head of house how things go (it's a secret), he passes on and you are left dum de dum until you ask what's that toggle switch for?? You're never too old to learn, you just have to wait for the 'moment' to learn.

Anyhow, I hope you had a joyous Thanksgiving and are looking forward to a peaceful Christmas.

Turkey – mincemeat pie and a hot nog to you.

P.S. We've all heard of biodegradable, right? How it's good for us? Good to save our world, yes? Well, my take on all of that stuff is – I was unfortunate enough on the 21st to have to follow a bus for four miles through the streets of Portland with a sign reading "Bio-diesel." The smell was "ugh," turned my stomach, gave me a headache (car windows up or down, didn't matter). It may save the ozone but it will snuff out the population.

Note how it's spelled, "diesel," perhaps they mean "celsdie" (a human)???



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