Flood-related Vaccination

The Iowa Department of Public Health does not recommend mass tetanus immunization programs during flooding and instead advises vaccination depending on individual circumstances (which might include participating in clean-up efforts - see below). Also, research indicates that exposure to flood water contaminated with raw sewage does not increase risk for hepatitis A virus infection.

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (Prevention of Hepatitis A Through Active or Passive Immunization) - www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5507a1.htm

Flood Information Resources

Iowans can seek information on health and environmental precautions through the Department of Public Health - www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flood.asp

If it’s your job to convey such information, the CDC provides audio and video public service announcements, as well as their written scripts, on numerous aspects of flood safety - www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/psa/

Safety in the Aftermath

As floodwaters recede, many people will likely continue to volunteer. The CDC has recently issued a recommendation that recovery workers be up to date with their tetanus vaccination. Volunteers should consider other safety recommendations for post-disaster work since they are essentially functioning like members of emergency response teams. Those workers are properly equipped with hard hats, goggles, heavy work gloves, and watertight boots. They use hearing protection around such equipment as chain saws, backhoes, blowers, and dryers. Clean-up workers are also advised to carefully monitor their own physical and emotional health. First responder guidelines stress the importance of eating and sleeping regularly, and of accepting what cannot be changed—the chain of command, waiting, equipment failures, etc.

And as much as volunteers want to help our “furry friends,” only properly equipped workers who are trained in animal handling should work directly with displaced animals.

CDC (Worker Safety After A Flood) - www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/workersafety.asp

IDPH (Avoiding Heat Illness during Flood Response) - www.idph.state.ia.us/common/press_releases/2008/080613_avoid_heat_illness.asp

CDC (Traumatic Incident Stress: Information For Emergency Response Workers) - www.cdc.gov/niosh/unp-trinstrs.html

July Is Eye Injury Prevention Month

Each day in the US about 2000 workers have an eye injury that requires medical treatment, most of them from small particles or objects (such as metal slivers or wood chips) striking the eye. Burns from splashes of industrial chemicals are also common. These injuries are largely preventable.

NIOSH (Tool Box Talk) - www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/eye/toolbox-eye.html

Occupational Hazards Magazine ("How Much Eye Protection is Enough?") - www.cdc.gov/elcosh/docs/d0500/d000553/d000553.html

OSHA (Eye and Face Protection eTool) - www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/eyeandface/index.html