

There are potential health risks associated with contaminated flood water. Always assume that all flood water is potentially contaminated with farm run-off, faecal matter from animals, and sewage. All items that have been in contact with flood water should be treated with caution. Personal hygiene, especially hand-washing, is very important to prevent the spread of disease.

- Do you have safe drinking water available?** (Either bottled, boiled, tankered, or safe council supply)
- Do you have access to toilets, handwashing facilities and washing facilities?** (Either temporary hand washing facilities, portaloos, functioning septic tanks or functioning council system)
- Do you have electricity?** Contact an electrician or the electrical supply authority before switching power on again if water has reached under-floor wiring or wall sockets or the structure has been damaged by flooding. Contact the gas supply authorities if the gas meter has been affected by water or has been damaged by flooding, debris, etc.
- Has a local authority building officer checked that the building is fit for habitation?**
- Have soft furnishings been cleaned?** Where a home, office, or retail premises has been affected by flood water above floor level, **all soft furnishings will need to be effectively decontaminated or disposed of.** This includes carpets, curtains, soft furniture, and any other fittings. In some cases thorough cleaning (i.e boiled or washed and treated with a disinfectant) followed by exposure to sunlight will be sufficient, but some furnishings and fittings will have to be thrown out. Each situation needs to be assessed individually. Anything that is discarded should be disposed of appropriately rather than leaving it lying around for weeks. **A general rule is if you can't put a soft furnishing in a washing machine it must be thrown out.**
- Have frozen foods that have thawed been discarded?** Any previously frozen food that has thawed must be thrown out. Any foods that was not in a waterproof container and was in contact with floodwaters must also be thrown out.

Other health concerns

Anyone experiencing any illness should consult their family doctor as usual or Healthline on 0800 611 116.

For more information check out the flooding page on the Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service website www.ttophs.govt.nz/flooding