

Monmouthshire County Council

Allotments – Action to Take After Flooding

What Are the Risks?

Flood water is dirty and can be contaminated with sewage, animal waste and other waste, from drains or the surrounding area. This means it may contain harmful bacteria or viruses. The water may also be contaminated with chemicals, although these are likely to be diluted and the risk from getting ill from chemicals in flood water is low.

There are simple hygiene steps you can take to help to keep yourself and your food safe.

The guidance in this leaflet applies to all but you should also be extra cautious if you or others fall into a vulnerable category (young children, older people and people with an underlying health condition).

Contaminated Water Supply

Water companies have a duty to take all necessary steps to protect public health. If a water treatment works becomes flooded and this affects the drinking water supply, they will provide specific advice to those affected. Guidance may include boiling of water prior to use.

You may also have containers or other stores of water onsite from other sources e.g. rainwater, etc. you are advised to dispose of any supplies that have come into contact with flood water.

Home-grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

- Throw away any produce that has come into contact with flood water
- Produce that has been growing above the flood water line, such as fruit on trees may have been contaminated through splashing, so it is advisable to cook this before eating, as cooking will effectively destroy any harmful micro-organisms that might be present. Washing and peeling produce will also reduce the risk.

Clean Up Post Flooding

- Put on protective clothing: rubber boots, an apron and waterproof gloves. A standard face mask, such as those sold in DIY stores, is also a good idea if you are scrubbing, hosing or pressure-washing. Goggles offer added protection, and they can be reused after thorough washing.
- Clean all affected hard surfaces, including walls, floors and furniture with hot soapy water, using an ordinary household cleaning product. Allow to dry thoroughly as this will also help to destroy germs left behind. Applying a 2nd stage of cleaning using a disinfectant or

sanitiser is then advisable.

- It is recommended that you look for a disinfectant or sanitiser that indicates that it meets the requirements of one of the following published standards: BS EN 1276:2009 or BS EN 13697:2001
- Make sure that you apply the products in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions particularly in respect of the time the product should be left on the surface (this is known as the contact time).
- Do not mix any cleaning products together or with bleaches as this may release dangerous fumes.
- Wash soft fabric items on a hot cycle (60°C or higher), which will destroy most germs. Items that cannot be put in a washing machine will need to be cleaned professionally. Specialist cleaners should be advised that the item has been exposed to floodwater. If this is not possible, they may have to be put in the bin.
- Wash all clothes worn during the clean-up separately.
- Heating and good ventilation will help with the drying process for any indoor spaces. Leave doors and windows open whenever possible and safe. You can help this process by using fans, air conditioning units and dehumidifiers.
- Do not use petrol or diesel generators indoors for drying out homes and buildings. There is a serious risk of carbon monoxide poisoning that can kill.
- Don't forget to wash your hands regularly and to take regular breaks in the fresh air.
- If your gas or electric supply has suffered water damage, then please engage a professional to check it out before you use it. Please don't attempt a repair yourself and don't use any supplies that have been immersed in water until they have been looked at.

Need More Information?

Contact: Environmental Health, Monmouthshire County Council

Tel: 01873 735420

Email: Environmentalhealth@monmouthshire.gov.uk