Common Illnesses from Exposure to Flood Water
• Skin and tissue infections following superficial cuts, scratches, abrasions, or insect bites
• Deep tissue infections following puncture wounds or trauma
• Gastrointestinal illnesses following ingestion of contaminated water or food

Prevention of Flood-related Illnesses — Remember Basic Hygiene Practices
• Always wash hands with soap and water before eating food and after handling articles contaminated with flood water.
• Avoid prolonged exposure to flood water.
• Wear protective gloves, boots and eye wear.
• Work cautiously, rest frequently and eat a balanced diet.
• Bathe or shower in clean water as soon as possible after exposure to flood water.
• Use insect repellents to discourage biting insects.

Safe Drinking Water Options
• Obtain water from a known safe public water supply or buy bottled water.
• Haul and store drinking water in clean containers (not old milk or juice jugs).
• Clear water may be treated for drinking by boiling it for one minute or by adding two to three drops of unscented household bleach per gallon.

Private Well Recommendations
• Don’t drink water from flooded wells unless it has been properly disinfected and then tested for drinking safety.
• Contact your local county health department for a free flood sampling container and advice.
• AFTER flood waters have receded, shock chlorinate and flush wells BEFORE submitting a sample to the Laboratory for testing.
• Shallow wells (less than 100 feet deep) can be contaminated from nearby flooding and should be tested to ensure a safe supply of drinking water.

Food Safety Recommendations
• Discard all containers with signs of leakage or damage.
• Foods in paper, cardboard or flexible plastic must be thrown away.
• Discard foods in corked bottles, canisters and screw-capped jars or bottles.
• Canned goods may be sanitized and used if the label is removed, the can is washed in hot, soapy water and the item is identified with a permanent marking pen.
• Solutions containing chlorine bleach are not recommended for cleaning cans because they accelerate rusting.
• Leafy vegetables cannot be washed adequately to be eaten raw.
• Thawed foods should not be refrozen.

General Clean-Up After a Flood
• Use non-sudsing cleaning products (Spic and Span®, Trisodium Phosphate, etc.) to wash interior surfaces.
• Use commercial cleaners for fabrics.
• Disinfect sewage-contaminated areas with a solution of household bleach (1/4 cup per gallon of water).
• Consult professional carpet cleaners before attempting to salvage carpet or carpet pads.
• Remove flood damaged sheet rock to permit studs and insulation to dry thoroughly.
• Remove silt, sludge, and debris from ductwork and dry it thoroughly before reactivating heating/air conditioning units.

State Hygienic Laboratory Services to Flood Families
• Private well water testing for individuals through county health departments
• Consultation on disease prevention, water and food safety and disinfection of environmental surfaces

Sources of Additional Information and Assistance
• ISU Extension Service
• County Health Departments
• Iowa Department of Public Health
• American Red Cross
• Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
• Iowa Department of Natural Resources