

June 3, 2011

CATEGORY: News Release
RELEASE DATE: For Immediate Release
RE: Flooding Along the Pend Oreille River
CONTACT: E. W. Gray, M.D., Health Officer
Northeast Tri County Health District

With flooding expected along the Pend Oreille River in early to mid June, there is a high likelihood that homes along the river will be impacted by the flood water. Public health officials are providing health and safety recommendation to homeowners should their property be impacted. Matt Schanz, Environmental Health Director for Northeast Tri County Health District, indicates that "it is best to assume that all floodwater is contaminated with disease causing organisms such as bacteria and viruses. As a result, we are advising some basic health and safety precautions be taken when preparing for, or returning home after a flood." Schanz said "the Health District is ready to assist affected property owners in how to keep themselves healthy when cleaning up after the floodwaters have subsided, what steps should be taken in cleaning homes, and what to do if their well and septic system have been flooded."

Important health considerations where flooding has occurred include:

- Basic personal health protection. Wear waterproof boots and gloves to help avoid skin contact with floodwater, wash hands often, be current on your tetanus vaccination, and protect open wounds from floodwater.
- Clean and dry out your home to disinfect and prevent mold growth. In most cases, household cleaning products will be adequate for cleaning. Items that cannot be washed and disinfected may have to be discarded. Remove as much moisture as possible quickly to help control mold growth.
- Eat and drink only food and water that are safe. Wells that have been flooded should be disinfected and tested before being used for drinking water. The Health District has specific guidance on the process to disinfect a drinking water well.

Stevens County - 240 E. Dominion, Colville, WA 99114
 Administration: 509-684-1301, Fax: 509-684-1002
 Clinic: 509-684-5048, Fax: 509-684-9878
 Family Planning: 509-684-6209, Fax: 509-684-9878

Stevens County - 260 S. Oak, Colville, WA 99114
 Environmental Health: 509-684-2262, Fax: 509-684-8506

Ferry County - 147 N. Clark, PO Box 584, Republic, WA 99166
509-775-3111, Fax: 509-775-2858

Pend Oreille County - 605 Highway 20, Newport, WA 99156
509-447-3131, Fax: 509-447-5644

Website: www.netchd.org

- Evaluate a septic system if it has been flooded. Don't put the system back in use until after the flood waters have receded and an evaluation of the system is made.

The Health District has detailed information available about preparing for a flood and what to do after a flood. This information is available at any of their offices and is on their website at www.netchd.org.

If you have any additional questions, please contact your local Health District office:

Colville Community Health/Administration	240 E. Dominion Ave	(509)684-5048
Colville Environmental Health	260 S. Oak St.	(509) 684-2262
Newport Community/Environmental Health	605 Highway 20	(509) 447-3131
Republic Community/Environmental Health	147 N. Clark	(509) 775-3111

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