



## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Date: October 14, 2016

### Wayne County Public Health Reminders

Wayne County, NC – As Wayne County residents return to their homes to clean up flood damage and/or high water related issues, the Wayne County Health Department has the following reminders to help residents protect themselves:

**Vaccinations:** Flood waters have the potential to contain chemicals and bacteria caused by animal waste or other naturally occurring pollutants. Anyone exposed to the flood waters are strongly encouraged to make sure they are up to date on their tetanus vaccine. Anyone exposed to sewage in their homes and/or sewage contaminated flood waters are strongly encouraged to make sure they are up to date on their Hepatitis A & B vaccines. Please contact your primary health care provider if you need more information about these vaccines or need assistance in getting vaccinated.

**Mold & Mildew:** Houses that have been flooded are likely to have mold and/or mildew occurring. As people return to their homes and begin cleanup, please keep the following in mind:

- Use personal protective equipment, i.e. gloves, masks, to minimize exposure to chemicals and pollutants.
- Always use proper hand washing with soap and water after handling flood materials.
- Work to create a well ventilated area, using fans and open windows/doors to promote good air circulation, to speed up the drying process for reducing moisture issues.
- People with asthma or other respiratory conditions should avoid extended exposure to areas with mold and mildew to minimize complications.
- Use appropriate cleaning materials and always follow instructions for any cleaning chemicals that are being used.
- Discard all porous materials, such as mattresses, couches, carpet, etc., that cannot be properly cleaned and/or disinfected to prevent the reemergence of mold and mildew.
- More information from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services regarding cleanup will be posted on the county's website at [www.waynegov.com](http://www.waynegov.com) and its social media channels at @waynecountync1 on Twitter and Wayne County Government on Facebook.

### **Rodent Borne-Diseases**

Flooding and high water related issues can create changes in pattern that can disrupt normal rodent activity which can result in increased rodent exposure. Please consider the following:

- When returning home, keep foods sealed in appropriate containers.
- Do not leave pet food out and accessible.
- Keep household waste in proper bins.
- Seal and/or monitor any areas where rodents can access the residence.

### **Mosquito Borne-Illnesses**

Receding flood waters and optimal weather conditions can create additional mosquito breeding areas. This can result in increased mosquito population and activity. While there are no original confirmed cases of the Zika virus in North Carolina at this time, there could be potential for an increase in other mosquito-borne illnesses. Residents are encouraged to take the following precautions:

- Dump or remove any exterior containers with standing water as soon as possible.
- Eliminate any other source of mosquito breeding areas if possible.
- Wear appropriate clothing when outside, such as long-sleeve shirts and pants.
- Properly apply insect repellent to reduce mosquito exposure.

“Floods and high water related issues can cause potential health issues for residents seeking to clean up their homes and properties,” states Davin Madden, Wayne County Health Director. “We would encourage everyone to use extreme caution when working in areas exposed to contaminated flood waters, and to always use best practices when cleaning up and discarding damaged materials from their properties. Being mindful of the necessary precautions will better allow the public to protect their personal health as our county works to recover through this process.”

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