



Health Care Volunteers in Floods and Other Disasters: No Extra Immunizations Needed

You may be surprised to know this but as a volunteer health care worker, you don't need shots like tetanus or hepatitis if there are floods or other disasters. However, you should already be immunized according to national recommendations for health care workers. This should include vaccines routinely recommended for adults as well as hepatitis B and influenza (during flu season).

Exposure to flood waters does not increase the risk of tetanus, and other diseases prevented by vaccines. In fact, calls for mass vaccination can pull needed resources away from clean-up and rescue efforts.

Tetanus

If you are dealing with a flood or other disaster, you don't need to take time to get a tetanus shot right now.

Tetanus-diphtheria boosters are recommended every 10 years. Make sure you are up-to-date.

If you are wounded

If you get a wound, you will need to seek medical care. Follow the instructions given by your sponsor agency. Whether or not you need a Td will depend on the type of wound you have and when you last had a shot. Being up-to-date for tetanus vaccination can make treatment for any wound easier.

Hepatitis A

There is no reason for most people to get a hepatitis A shot during floods or other disasters. Hepatitis A disease is not a risk when working in flood waters.

Hepatitis B

Health care workers who come into contact with blood and other body fluids should already be immunized for hepatitis B. As always, apply blood-borne precautions when providing care to injured persons.

Protect yourself from injury

To avoid injury and prevent infection while tending to victims of floods and other disasters, wear protective clothing:

- Heavy, hard-soled shoes
- Long-sleeved shirt
- Long pants