



## Tip Sheet for Patients

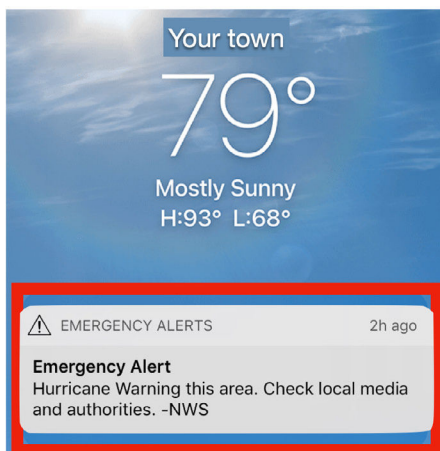
### Staying Safe During Floods

#### 1. Know whether you are at risk for flooding.

You can look up the risk of flooding at your home's location at [riskfactor.com](http://riskfactor.com). This site will tell you the likelihood that flooding will occur at your address.

You can also check for flood alerts on your phone weather app, by checking the weather on your computer (such as at [weather.com](http://weather.com)), or by checking your local news station on the radio, television, or social media.

#### iPhone weather app



#### weather.com



Weather alerts will appear in the areas outlined in red (including flood and hurricane watches and warnings)

Know the difference between a hurricane and flood *watch* and *warning*.

#### FLOOD WATCH

A flood watch is issued when flooding is possible. Stay tuned to radio/TV/social media and be ready to seek higher ground.

#### FLOOD WARNING

A flood warning is issued when flooding is happening or will happen soon. Some roads will be flooded.

When flood watch is issued, you should make sure your car has a full tank of gas, your cell phone is fully charged, and your emergency supply kit is ready. For a flood warning, follow guidance on the "Flood Action Plan" document.

## 2. Know the risks to your health from floods and how to minimize them.

Severe storms and hurricanes create conditions where injuries are much more common.

Risk	Description
<b>Carbon Monoxide Exposure</b>	If you lose power, do not heat your home, or cook, by burning fuels, such as wood or propane, indoors. Do not turn your car on to use the air conditioning if the garage door is closed. These can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning, which can be deadly.
<b>Electrocution</b>	<p>Strong winds can knock down or damage power lines. Do not touch any downed power lines, or wade into standing water that power lines may have fallen into, because this can electrocute you.</p> <p>Electric appliances that are wet may also pose an electrocution risk. Turn off the power to your appliances at the circuit breaker or fuse box if your home has flooded.</p>
<b>Infections</b>	<p>Standing water can contain bacteria and viruses that can cause disease. It can also be a breeding ground for mosquitos that transmit infections.</p> <p>After severe storms, water may not be safe to drink, especially from private wells. Look for advisories to boil your water before you use water in your home after a storm. Local authorities will let you know if your water is safe for drinking and bathing.</p> <p>During a boil water advisory, use only bottled, boiled, or treated water for any water that will touch or enter your body, such as for drinking, cooking, bathing, brushing your teeth, etc.</p> <p>When in doubt, throw it out. Throw away any food or bottled water that may have contacted floodwater.</p>
<b>Mold</b>	<p>Molds can grow on damp surfaces after flooding. Exposure to molds can cause coughs, congestion, and headaches, as well as asthma flares.</p> <p>To manage mold in your home, see <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/mold/pdfs/You_Can_Control_Mold.pdf">cdc.gov/mold/pdfs/You_Can_Control_Mold.pdf</a> or <a href="https://www.epa.gov/mold/brief-guide-mold-moisture-and-your-home">epa.gov/mold/brief-guide-mold-moisture-and-your-home</a>.</p>

<b>Power Outages</b>	If you use electric medical devices, medications that require refrigeration, or have electric heating or cooling in your home, you will need a back-up power plan in case you lose power. You also may want to evacuate before you are told to do so to avoid the risks of a power outage.
<b>Standing Water</b>	Avoid wading or driving through standing water because you may get injured or drown. As little as 6 inches of water can cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
<b>Trees, Utility Poles, and Buildings</b>	Be careful if you are around damaged trees, utility poles, or other structures as they can fall on you. Do not walk underneath or inside anything that looks damaged or unsteady. If your home has been damaged, use caution when re-entering or wait for authorities to determine it safe to enter.

Table adapted from FEMA "Returning Home After a Flood" available at [fema.gov](http://fema.gov).

Visit [cdc.gov/disasters](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters) to learn more about risks to your health from floods.

### 3. In case you need to evacuate, prepare your home and belongings to make return safer.



Done	Task
	Have a fire extinguisher in your home, and make sure your family knows where it is and how to use it. Visit <a href="https://hsph.me/how-to-use-a-fire-extinguisher">hsph.me/how-to-use-a-fire-extinguisher</a> to learn how.
	Buy and install sump pumps with back-up power in case of flooding.
	For drains, toilets, and other sewer connections, install backflow valves or plugs to prevent floodwaters from entering.
	Anchor fuel tanks to the ground to prevent them from being damaged and releasing toxins into your basement.
	Keep copies of important documents, such as insurance policies, credit cards, and birth certificates, stored in waterproof containers, ideally above the ground floor of your home.
	Turn off electrical power if there is standing water, fallen power lines, or before you evacuate.
	Turn off gas and water supplies before you evacuate.

