



Ford County Public Health Department

235 North Taft Street

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August 16, 2021

For Immediate Release

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Floodwater Safety

PAXTON- Floodwaters contain many things that may harm health. We don't know exactly what is in floodwater at any given point in time. Floodwater can contain:

- Downed power lines
- Human and livestock waste
- Household, medical, and industrial hazardous waste (chemical, biological, and radiological)
- Coal ash waste that can contain carcinogenic compounds such as arsenic, chromium, and mercury
- Other contaminants that can lead to illness
- Physical objects such as lumber, vehicles, and debris
- Wild or stray animals such as rodents and snakes

Exposure to contaminated floodwater can cause:

- Wound infections
- Skin rash
- Gastrointestinal illness
- Tetanus
- Leptospirosis (not common)

How Can I Tell If I Need a Tetanus Shot?

To decide if you need a tetanus shot after a wound, first decide if the object that caused the wound was dirty or clean. An object is dirty if it has dirt, soil, spit, or feces on it. A clean object does not have dirt, soil, spit, or feces on it.

You will need a tetanus shot if:

- Your wound was caused by something that was clean and your last tetanus shot was longer than 10 years ago.
- Your wound was caused by something that was dirty and your last tetanus shot was longer than 5 years ago.
- You are not sure if your wound was caused by something clean or dirty and your last tetanus shot was longer than 5 years ago.
- You are not sure when you had your last tetanus shot.

- You did not get the first series of tetanus shots (primary vaccination series).

If you need a tetanus shot, call your doctor to arrange for a shot. Ford County Public Health Department will also list upcoming tetanus shot clinics as they become available.