

Standard public health messages for emergencies

Issue	Headlines	Detail
Taking care	Check on your neighbours, family and friends.	Don't be afraid to ask for help, especially from your family or neighbours. Keep an eye out for each other, particularly if there are vulnerable people (e.g. the elderly, disabled or unwell) in your neighbourhood.
Warmth	Make sure you and your family keep warm – particularly if there are elderly, young, or ill people in your household.	If you do not have electricity, make plans to stay warm by using heating units that do not rely on electricity (such as solid fuel heaters) or arrange to stay with friends or family with power. Do not stay in your home if it is not weather tight. Make sure your family dress warmly even when inside.
Handwashing	Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser often, particularly after toileting, and before and after eating or preparing food.	Wet your hands with water, soap your hands and rub palm to palm then spread the soap all over. Rub your hands together, all over back and front and in between fingers and thumbs for 15-20 seconds. Rinse the soap off and dry your hands well for 15-20 seconds. Or, for alcohol rub: Use one full squirt of alcohol based hand rub into the palm of your cupped hand. Rub palm to palm, rub fingertips against the palm of each hand, go between the fingers, backs of your hands, thumbs, wrists and then the nails taking 15-20 seconds in total and ensuring all surfaces of the hands and wrists are covered.
Water	Boil or treat all water from taps and tankers before drinking, brushing teeth or using in food preparation. Bringing water to the boil is sufficient to kill bugs. If you cannot boil water, treat it by adding 1 teaspoon of household bleach per 10 litres of water and leave for 30 minutes.	Water needs to be boiled even if the smell or taste of chlorine is present. The Council and Public Health are working together to test water supplies in xxx and will update this advice as soon as we have a clear idea of how the water supply has been impacted by the xxx. Employers should make sure boiled or bottled water is available at work. This applies even for workplaces with their own water supply, until testing can be completed and the supply can be cleared of risk. Cooking, dishes, washing yourself You can use water for cooking, dishes, and washing yourself from these house supplies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot water cylinder and header tank. • Toilet cistern. This water is only safe to use if no chemical toilet cleaner is present. • Use spa and swimming pool water, if available, for keeping yourself clean and washing clothes.
Food	Take extreme care with food – particularly perishable foods, e.g., meat, fish, dairy that should be refrigerated. Store perishable food in a cool,	Inspect all food for signs of spoilage and contamination before use. Dispose of smelly, slimy, mouldy or discoloured food immediately. Throw out high-risk foods (cooked meat and poultry, milk, cooked egg and products made with raw egg, fish and seafood, and cooked rice) after 2 hours at room temperature.

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	<p>dry, dark place, and use it first.</p> <p>To conserve perishable food in the refrigerator and/or freezer use ice, keep closed as much as possible and cover with blankets, quilts, or newspaper.</p> <p>Do not refreeze food once power returns.</p>	<p>Use food with a short shelf life first.</p> <p>Check food that may have come into contact with flood water, e.g. fresh fruits and vegetables, foods in packets, bottles, cans or screw cap jars. Foods in sealed cans and bottles may be safe to eat if the cans don't have bulges or leaks. To disinfect before you open them, remove labels and wash the containers with soap or detergent and then immerse in a chlorine bleach solution (50mL bleach in 1L water or 1 part bleach to 20 parts water) for 1 minute. Rinse containers in clean water, dry and relabel them.</p> <p>Clean baby bottle teats and pacifiers, cooking, eating and other kitchen utensils that have been in contact with flood waters. Wash in hot, soapy water and sanitise by immersing for 1 minute in chlorine bleach solution (50mL bleach in litre water or 1 part bleach to 20 parts water) then rinse again in safe water.</p> <p>Do not eat shellfish from estuaries, river mouths or harbours after floods or earthquakes because of possible sewerage contamination.</p> <p>Frozen and Refrigerated Foods</p> <p>If your refrigerator or freezer is without power for a long period:</p> <p>Keep perishable foods as cool as possible – use chilly bins if available. Use perishable food first, and keep perishable foods in a cool, dry, dark place, ideally below 4°C.</p> <p>Divide your frozen foods among friends and family or seek freezer space in a church, school, or neighbour/community freezer with electricity.</p> <p>Thawed food can usually be eaten if it is still 'refrigerator cold,' or contains ice crystals. Perishable foods may be cooked then frozen, provided that the freezer has not been inoperative for more than 36 hours. If there is any doubt as to the safety of the food it should be destroyed.</p> <p>A freezer that is half full will hold food safely for up to 24 hours. A full freezer will hold food safely for 48 hours. To maximise the time food will stay frozen avoid opening freezers until you need something, and close them securely as soon as you can.</p>
Milk	<p>If you are using raw milk, heat it until it's just boiling (or keep it at 70 degrees Celsius for 1 minute) before use.</p>	<p>Take care with raw milk</p> <p>Milk straight from the cow or vat has a high risk of containing bacteria that can make you sick.</p>
Sickness	<p>If you have any diarrhoea, vomiting or fever, phone your General Practice team or call Healthline on 0800 611 116 immediately. Limit contact with other people, do not go to work and do not prepare food for</p>	<p>Stopping the spread</p> <p>Stay at home if you are feeling unwell. If you need supplies, ask a neighbour, friend or family member to help.</p> <p>Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing - cough into the crook of your elbow or a disposable tissue, then dispose of the tissue straight away.</p> <p>Wash hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitiser) frequently and including after sneezing or</p>

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	<p>anyone.</p> <p>If you don't have running water, make a plan to move in with a friend or relative who has running water if you get sick. When you are sick, running water (for hand washing and toileting) is much more important.</p>	<p>coughing or after touching something that is touched by many others, such as cash, handrails, door handles or shopping trolleys.</p> <p>Cleaning minimises the transmission of bacteria and viruses. Use a disinfectant cleaner to wipe hard surfaces, particularly items others touch such as taps, handles, railings, telephones, remote controls, computer keyboards and tablets – check first that cleaning products won't damage them.</p> <p>Don't share cups or glasses, dishes, and cutlery with others. Thoroughly wash utensils with soap and hot water after use – a dishwasher is better still.</p> <p>If you are sick, take particular care to stay away from hospitals, rest homes and schools - unless of course you need emergency care.</p> <p>Avoid crowded places and large gatherings. Try to keep at least one metre from others wherever practical - larger distances are more effective.</p> <p>Avoid shaking hands. Don't hug or kiss people if you or they are sick. Remember, people may be infectious before any symptoms show.</p> <p>Consider wearing a disposable face mask if you really must visit others and you or they are sick. Dispose of used masks carefully - bag and bin them.</p> <p>If you need to talk to people, communicate via the telephone, internet or video conferencing.</p> <p>Talk to your employer about working from home where possible.</p> <p>Avoid using public transport.</p>
<p>Toilets</p>	<p>Even if water is on, don't flush toilets.</p> <p>Bury human waste (faeces, vomit) in your garden or wrap tightly in plastic and place in your red bin.</p> <p>Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser immediately after dealing with any human waste.</p>	<p>How to make a temporary toilet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line a toilet, bucket, or rubbish bin with a strong, leak-proof plastic bag – or if in doubt double bag it to be sure. • Put half a cup of liquid bleach in the bag. • Make a seat from two planks of wood or use a toilet seat on top of the container. • Keep the bin completely covered when not in use, to prevent attracting flies. • Tie the top of the bag firmly when full and place it inside another bag. • Dig a hole about one metre deep well away from the vegetable garden and downhill from any water source and bury the bag. • Make sure the bag is well covered with dirt. • Wash your hands thoroughly after going to the toilet or handling human waste. <p>How to make a long-drop toilet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dig a hole up to a metre deep and well away from the vegetable garden or any water source. • Make a seat out of planks of wood. • Cover the waste properly with dirt after each use.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throw in a little garden lime, insecticide or disinfectant to reduce smells and flies. • Use the long-drop until it is full to within 300mm of ground level. • Cover completely with soil and dig a new long-drop.
Sewage	Waterways are contaminated with sewage. Avoid contact with rivers, sea water, ponds, puddles or other surface water. Do not swim, paddle, fish, or gather shellfish or any other food from oceans and rivers.	<p>In parts of xxx, sewerage pipes have broken or are breaking as services come back online. People should avoid sewage and silt that may have been contaminated with sewage, even if it is on their properties. If you need sewage removed from your property call Christchurch City Council on 941 8999.</p> <p>If people have to work with silt they should wear water-proof gloves, gumboots and a dust mask. People should also shower or wash thoroughly immediately after contact with either sewage or silt, and wash clothes separately.</p>
Flood water	If you can, avoid contact with flood water.	<p>Flood waters may contain faecal material from overflowing sewage systems, and agricultural and industrial by products.</p> <p>Skin contact with flood water does not, by itself, pose a serious health risk, however there is some risk of disease from eating or drinking anything contaminated with flood water.</p> <p>If you have any open cuts or sores that will be exposed to flood water or flood contaminated items, keep them as clean as possible by washing well with soap to control infection. If a wound develops redness, swelling, or drainage, seek immediate medical attention.</p> <p>Parents need to help children avoid waterborne illness. Do not let children play in flood water areas, wash children's hands frequently (always before meals), and do not allow children to play with flood-water contaminated toys that have not been disinfected.</p>
Fires	<p>Health effects from smoke usually present at the time. Most people won't have any long-term health effects from short term exposure to smoke.</p> <p>Smoke may worsen symptoms of pre-existing lung or heart disease.</p> <p>Avoid smoke: stay inside with doors and windows closed or, if you are concerned, leave the area.</p> <p>Keep cool and drink plenty of fluids (but not alcohol).</p> <p>Wear light clothes and reduce physical activity.</p>	<p>People with pre-existing respiratory or cardiovascular illnesses should be vigilant and follow their pre-prepared action/treatment plan.</p> <p>Asthma: Most asthmatics know about asthma triggers but they may be caught unprepared – as a precaution asthmatics and people with other respiratory conditions should be advised to self-evacuate.</p> <p>Masks: Most masks will not provide adequate protection from the small particles and chemicals that are found in bushfire smoke.</p> <p>Use fans to keep cool rather than an air-conditioner unless the fresh-air intake can be turned off.</p> <p>If it is too warm to stay inside with the windows closed, or if you are very sensitive to smoke, leave the area.</p>

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	<p>Keep an eye on elderly neighbours or other people at risk.</p> <p>If you feel unwell after breathing in smoke, phone your own GP team for advice.</p>	
Medical attention	<p>If you require medical attention contact your GP team. After hours your call will be directed to a nurse who will be able to advise you.</p> <p>Otherwise, Healthline on 0800 611 116.</p> <p>If it's an emergency call 111.</p>	
Medication	<p>Ensure you have a good supply of your medication, wherever you are.</p>	<p>If you take medication regularly, don't wait until you run out - make sure you have sufficient medication to see you through.</p> <p>If you leave home, take enough prescription meds with you to sustain you until you return. Take everyday supplies such as paracetamol, ibuprofen, plasters and a disinfectant such as hydrogen peroxide or iodine in case you need them.</p>
Support	<p>Call the x Support Line on 0800 xxx if you need support, advice or just someone to talk to.</p>	<p>Emotional Responses to the Recent Crisis</p> <p>These have been extremely difficult times for all of us. Each of us may be affected in a different way. Common experiences include: poor sleep, irritability, nervousness, unpleasant dreams, loss of energy, feelings of tiredness, and a wide range of possible emotions such as anger, guilt or sadness.</p> <p>In young children symptoms can include bedwetting, being 'clingy' to a parent and displaying disruptive and disturbing behaviour. These are all normal and understandable responses. They will generally lessen over time. Support from friends and family helps with recovery.</p> <p>If you are concerned about yourself or a family member or a friend, you are encouraged to call:</p> <p>Special Helpline 0800 xxx</p> <p>This service may offer immediate advice and support or may connect you with another helping agency. Visiting your GP team is always a good option as they may also be able to assist by referring you to other levels of support.</p>
Pets	<p>If your pets are affected by the EVENT, include pets and livestock in your plans for getting through – consider their needs for</p>	<p>Besides the need to look after their welfare, pets that aren't provided for or have gone missing can be an avoidable cause of stress for people. People may put themselves in danger returning to an evacuated property.</p> <p>Make sure pets or livestock have sufficient clean drinking water, food and shelter and are not confined in a</p>

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	food, water and shelter. Take pets with you when practical if you evacuate.	way that will be stressful for them if they are left alone for a period.

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