

St. Charles County Missouri

For immediate release:
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Flooded Citizens May Need Tetanus Vaccines

People who live or work in the flooded areas of St. Charles County have been asking questions about flood cleanup and possible health and disease risk. The following information addresses those concerns.

All individuals who are cleaning up flooded areas should make sure that their tetanus vaccinations are up-to-date. Now that floodwater has receded, many people are cleaning up and repairing their homes and property. Injuries may occur during cleanup. Cuts and injuries from metal, glass and nails hidden by water and mud are common. These cut and puncture injuries put the unvaccinated person at risk for tetanus. In general, individuals should receive boosters for tetanus every 10 years. In the case of an injury, a new booster should be administered if it has been more than 5 years since the last booster. Tetanus shots are available from your regular health care provider or from the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment for directions call 636-949-7400 or for a map with directions log on to www.scchealth.org.

There have also been numerous calls from citizens in flooded areas asking whether persons cleaning flooded basements should be immunized against hepatitis A. Although people can contract a number of diseases from contaminated water, "There are no data to suggest that there is an increased risk of hepatitis A after a flood," according to Suzanne Cotter, M.D., from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Using common sense and good personal hygiene will prevent many health hazards in areas with flood damage. Flood cleanup is very dirty work, so people should wear gloves for protection and wash their hands thoroughly with soap and clean water after working and before they touch any food. Cuts and scrapes should be cleaned with warm soap and water and be bandaged for protection from any further contamination. Citizens may also want to discuss injuries and appropriate treatment with their regular health care provider.

The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment provides public health services to the public from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday at 1650 Boonslick in St. Charles. The Department also operates

the County Recycling Center at 2110 E Pitman in Wentzville and the Pet Adoption Center at 4850 Mid Rivers Mall Dr. in Cottleville. For information on the variety of programs and services provided by the department call 636-949-7400 or visit the department website at www.scchealth.org. The Pet Adoption Center can be reached directly at 636-949-PETS.