



# Public Service Announcement

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The infrastructure damage in Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria has significantly impacted residents' ability to get vital health and safety information. There are a significant number of residents in your area from Puerto Rico, and they could share this critical information with their friends and relatives who live in Puerto Rico. Please share this information from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services via news stories, your web site and social media so your audiences can get vital health information to Puerto Rico residents. Thank you!

### Protecting health following hurricanes:

People living outside of the area affected by Hurricane Maria can help keep their family and friends safe *after* a hurricane has made landfall. There may be a risk of [carbon monoxide poisoning](#), and there is danger from downed power lines, flood water, and mold, among other hazards. For tips on how you can help your loved ones be safe after a hurricane visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/after.html>. Below are a few key recommendations that you can share with your loved ones in affected areas:

- Avoid [Carbon Monoxide \(CO\) poisoning](#) after a disaster. Only use a portable generator outdoors in a dry area at least 20 feet away from doors, windows and vents that can allow CO to come indoors.
- Avoid [injuries](#) when you return to your home after the storm.
- Protect yourself from [mosquito bites](#) and reduce the number of mosquitoes in your area.

- Take steps to [cope](#) with feelings of fear, grief and depression after a traumatic event.
  - The Disaster Distress Helpline ([disasterdistress.samhsa.gov](https://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov)) provides 24/7, year-round crisis counseling and support. Call 1-800-985-5990 (TTY for deaf/hearing impaired: 1-800-846-8517) or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

#### **Be safe after flooding**

- Avoid driving through flooded areas, especially when the water is fast moving.
  - As little as six inches of water can cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
  - Return to your flooded home only after local authorities have told you it is safe to do so.
- Use bleach to clean mold off of hard things like floors, stoves, sinks, countertops, plates, and tools.
  - Dilute bleach to the [proper concentration](#).
- Throw out items that cannot be washed and cleaned with bleach, such as mattresses, pillows, carpeting, carpet padding, and stuffed toys.
- Remove and throw out drywall and insulation contaminated with sewage or flood waters.
- Thoroughly clean all hard surfaces, such as concrete, wood, and metal furniture, countertops, and appliances, with hot water and laundry or dish detergent.

#### **Keep food safe**

- Throw away any food and bottled water that may have come in contact with flood or storm water. Learn how to [save undamaged food packages exposed to flood](#).
- When it comes to the [safety of your food](#), when in doubt, throw it out.
- Learn more at [foodsafety.gov](https://foodsafety.gov).

#### **Use Safe Water**

- Listen for water advisories from local authorities to find out if your water is safe for drinking and bathing.

- Keeping [your](#) hands clean during an emergency helps prevent the spread of germs. If your tap water is not safe to use, wash your hands with soap and water that has been [boiled or disinfected](#).
- Do not use [contaminated](#) water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, make ice, or make baby formula.
- If you don't have clean, safe, bottled water, **boil water** to make it safe. If boiling is not possible, you often can make water safer to drink by using a disinfectant, such as unscented household chlorine bleach, iodine, or chlorine dioxide tablets.

### **Public Service Announcements**

HHS has hurricane [public service announcements](#) (PSAs), including some in Spanish and American Sign Language:

- Cleanup
- Food and Water Safety
- Injury and Disease Safety
- Medication Safety
- Stay Safe at Home After a Tropical Storm or Hurricane
- Stay Safe Outside After a Tropical Storm or Hurricane