



Disease Risks and Sewage

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Raw sewage can contain certain biological agents such as bacteria, viruses, and parasites. However, the risk of illness depends on the type and the duration of exposure to the sewage. The most common mode of infection is through oral contact. Skin contact poses a health threat if you have an open wound. The risk of exposure when handling sewage can be **reduced significantly** by effective and immediate clean-up and by taking appropriate safety precautions.

Some biologic agents in sewage or in water contaminated with sewage

- **Bacteria** (examples: E. coli, salmonella) may cause diarrhea, fever, cramps, or vomiting.
- **Parasite** (example: giardia) may cause diarrhea, and stomach cramps
- **Viruses** (example: Hepatitis A causes liver disease. You may feel abdominal pain, nausea, jaundice or yellow skin or diarrhea.)

Safety Precautions

- Assume anything touched by sewage is contaminated.
- Avoid sewage contaminated water.
- Follow any boil water advisories in your community, if there is any sewage or other contamination of your water supply.
- Do not eat or drink in areas near sewage
- If you've been in contact with sewage or sewage-contaminated water, wash your hands well with soap and clean water before eating or touching mouth or face.
- Immediately wash and disinfect any wound that comes into contact with sewage.
- Shower and change out of your clothes if you are in contact with sewage. Launder clothes separately or discard.
- Wash hands with soap and clean water after touching any surfaces or objects that may have been contaminated with sewage.
- Vaccinations: If you've been exposed to sewage, you need to be up-to-date on your shots for tetanus and diphtheria (Adults should have had a shot within the last 10 years).
- Contact a doctor immediately if illness occurs.



Hand washing steps:

1. Use soap and warm running water.
2. Scrub hands for at least 20 seconds; use a nail brush.
3. Wash all surfaces:
 - Between fingers
 - Under fingernails
 - Back of hands
 - Wrists
4. Rinse well and dry hands with a clean paper towel.