



FDOH Urges Floridians to Avoid Floodwaters and Prevent Exposure to *Vibrio Vulnificus*

Contact:

Communications Office
NewsMedia@flhealth.gov,
850-245-4111

Tallahassee, Fla.—The Florida Department of Health (Department) urges residents and visitors to [avoid floodwaters](#) and prevent exposure to *Vibrio* in anticipation of flooding and heavy rain caused by Hurricane Milton. While floodwaters are present, there is an increased risk of *Vibrio* infections, such as [Vibrio vulnificus](#), which can be life-threatening.

Vibrio bacteria, commonly found in warm coastal waters, can cause illness when ingested or when open wounds are exposed to contaminated water. After heavy rainfall and flooding, the concentration of these bacteria may rise, particularly in brackish and saltwater environments.

What You Need to Know

1. **Risk Factors:** Individuals who have compromised immune systems, liver disease, or open wounds are at higher risk for *Vibrio vulnificus*.
2. **Symptoms:** Symptoms may include diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fever, chills, fast or high heart rate, confusion, or disorientation.
3. **When to Seek Medical Attention:** Seek medical attention **immediately** if you experience symptoms associated with *Vibrio vulnificus*, especially after exposure to floodwaters.
4. **Safety Precautions:**
 - Avoid swimming or wading in floodwaters, standing water, sea water, and brackish water, if possible.
 - Cover open cuts or wounds with waterproof bandages if they could come in contact with floodwaters, standing water, sea water, or brackish water.
 - Wash skin and any open cuts or wounds thoroughly with soap and clean water after any contact with floodwaters.

The Department continues to monitor and respond to health risks posed by Hurricane Milton. For additional emergency information, including the [Vibrio vulnificus factsheet](#), visit FloridaHealth.gov/Emergency or contact your [county health department](#).

About the Florida Department of Health

The Florida Department of Health, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [FloridaHealth.gov](#).