

Flooding: considerations for UCCs

Many studies have been published examining the effect of flooding on populations including the immediate and long-term effects. There are implications for emergency services including rural UCCs before, during and after the flood during clean-up that will be seen for at least 4 weeks but may last for several months. These implications are related to: Exposure to flood waters / increased moisture; interaction with unstable environments and structures; interruption to medicines and healthcare, contamination of drinking water, food supply disruption, evacuation and displacement and mental stress.

Studies show those UCCs and EDs in flood effected areas may see an increase in presentations related to:

Traumatic Injury and poisoning:

- Asphyxia
- Carbon monoxide poisoning
- Spider and insect bites
- Animal bites including snakes & rodents
- Lacerations & puncture wounds
- Eye injuries
- Orthopaedic injury

Mechanisms of injury:

- Drowning
- Falls
- Struck by debris
- Burns
- Electrocutions
- Road trauma
- Chemical exposure
- Crush injuries
- Violence
- Hypothermia

Infectious and parasitic disease:

- Gastrointestinal illness
- Unspecified febrile illness
- Communicable diseases including Hepatitis A & E
- Insect borne diseases
- Upper Respiratory infections
- Sepsis
- Leptospirosis
- Skin infections
 - Wound infections
 - Irritant and allergic contact dermatitis
 - Bacterial and fungal skin infections



Reduced access to healthcare and equipment:

- Reduced access to food and clean water leading to dehydration and malnutrition
- Reduction in preventative care and routine follow up care
- Limited access to prescriptions, prescription refills, oxygen
- Exacerbation of chronic conditions due to increased stress and non-availability of medications – highest incidence in cardiovascular disease, respiratory diseases and diabetes
- Psychosocial and Psychological distress
- Exacerbation of pre-existing Mental health disorders

Remember:

- Be aware of the likelihood of an increase for these types of presentations to your UCC
- Utilise the clinical resources linked in the RUCN [resource library](#)
- Look after yourself too!

Emergency Quick Links



[VIC Traffic](#)

official live feed of travel times, road closures and traffic alerts.



[BOM Flood warning summary](#)

Live weather and flood warnings



[VIC Emergency](#)

official live feed of current warnings and incidents. Includes information related to Prepare and get ready, incidents and warnings and relief and recovery.



[State Emergency Service SES](#)

Local flood guides and sandbag collection points.



[Australian Government Services](#)

Support for people affected by the Victorian floods

References:

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