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PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Health & Wellness Advises on Vector and Waterborne Diseases Due to Flooding

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The Ministry of Health & Wellness advises that floodwaters can be the source of many infectious diseases, chemical hazards, and injuries, and therefore urges the public to avoid walking, working, or playing in floodwaters. Exposure to contaminated floodwater can cause wound infections, skin rashes, stomach illnesses, tetanus, and waterborne diseases such as typhoid fever, cholera, leptospirosis, and hepatitis A.

The Ministry recommends the following ways to remain safe after a flood:

- Always stay out of floodwater, especially if you have an open wound.
- Cover any open wounds you may have with a waterproof bandage to reduce the chance of infection.
- Keep open wounds as clean as possible by washing them well with soap and clean water. Seek medical attention if necessary.
- Wear boots, rubber gloves, and goggles if you must enter floodwaters.

The public is also advised that, as a result of increased rains, floods, and potential stagnant water, breeding sites for mosquitoes will also increase. All persons living in or going into the affected areas must exercise caution to prevent mosquito bites, which could cause dengue and other vector-borne diseases. Everyone is asked to protect themselves by wearing long-sleeved clothing and long pants, using mosquito repellent and mosquito coils, and ensuring windows are properly screened or closed before nightfall. Where possible, communities are asked to clean their surroundings and remove containers with standing water that can become breeding sites for mosquitoes.

Please visit your nearest public health or vector control office for more information.

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