



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Hawai'i Department of Health reminds public of health risks and precautions during heavy rains and potential flooding

HONOLULU – As Tropical Storm Olivia moves through the Hawaiian Islands, the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) urges residents and visitors to be safe and take the following precautions to stay healthy as the storm continues its track through the state.

Avoid brown water and pay attention to advisories

Brown water advisories have been issued for the islands of Maui and Lāna'i, and parts of Kaua'i, O'ahu, and Hawai'i Island, due to pollution caused by recent heavy rains. The public is advised to stay out of floodwaters and storm water runoff due to possible overflowing cesspools, sewer, manholes, pesticides, animal fecal matter, dead animals, pathogens, chemicals, and associated flood debris. Children should not be allowed to play in floodwater areas.

If people must enter brown water along coastlines or in areas where water has pooled due to flooding, take precautions to cover any open wounds or injuries, and be sure to wash and rinse thoroughly with soap and clean water afterward. For the latest updates on brown water advisories, visit DOH's Clean Water Branch website at <https://eha-cloud.doh.hawaii.gov/cwb/#!/landing> and sign up for email alerts.

Practice food safety and proper handling

Severe weather conditions may cause power outages and disrupt refrigeration of food. Refrigerated food is safe as long as power is out no more than four hours. Discard perishable food that has been above 40°F for more than two hours. Throw away spoiled or unrefrigerated food to prevent foodborne illnesses. Use covered and sealed containers for disposal to minimize the presence of flies and rodents. Wash all produce carefully, no matter where it's from, under clean, running water, and cook food thoroughly. For information on food safety go to https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/refridg_food.html.

Wash hands often with soap and clean water to prevent spreading and contracting any illnesses, especially before handling and preparing food to avoid food contamination. If soap and clean water are unavailable, alcohol-based hand-sanitizers may be used instead. For more information on health risks during flooding, visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) site: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/extreme-weather/floods-standingwater.html>.

Take steps to support good mental health

Natural disasters are stressful and can cause emotional reactions, which everyone experiences differently. Taking care of your emotional and mental health is important and shouldn't be

overlooked. Talk to family members and friends to maintain a strong support system. Help your children by sharing age-appropriate information and set a good example by taking care of yourself. Take breaks and unwind periodically and ask for help if you need it. In the aftermath of a natural disaster, eligibility for mental health services is very broad and services are available to anyone with needs related to the disaster. DOH's Crisis Line of Hawaii is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide assistance. On O'ahu, call (808) 832-3100. On the neighbor islands, call toll-free at 1 (800) 753-6879.

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