



## What to know: Flood water, contaminants, and your health

After flooding in the South Park neighborhood of Seattle on December 27, 2022, water samples were collected and tested for bacterial and chemical contamination. Here is what we learned:

- Tap water in the area has been tested and is safe. No contaminants were found in tap water.
- Tests found that two pools of outdoor flood water contained very low levels of chemicals. The chemicals found at very low levels do not present a health risk from touching flood water, swallowing small amounts of flood water, or inhaling flood water.
- Tests found that pools of flood water inside of two houses had levels of E. coli bacteria that could have presented a health risk, with cleaning services recommended.
- Professional cleaning, post-flood mitigation services, and bacterial testing were offered to all homes impacted by flooding, and have been completed for all homes that requested the services. Please call Seattle Public Utilities at (206) 684-0912 with any questions.
- Bacterial contamination from flood waters may have affected areas outside your home, including gardens and children's play areas. Continue to follow public health guidance to avoid health risks inside and outside of the home (see "Protect your health after a flood" below).
- If you are exposed to water contaminated by E. coli bacteria, symptoms can include: fever, headache, body aches, tiredness, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramping, and diarrhea. Talk to your healthcare provider if you have symptoms after potential exposure to flood water.
- If you do not have a healthcare provider, contact the Community Health Access Program (CHAP) at 1-800-756-5437, or email [chap@kingcounty.gov](mailto:chap@kingcounty.gov).
- For more details about water sample collection and test results, see [Flood water, contaminants, and your health: Additional information and resources](#).

### Protect your health after a flood

Follow these steps to protect yourself and your family from health risks after a flood:

- Wash skin that may have touched flood water with soap and clean water.
- Wash dishes, clothes, children's toys, or other personal items that may have touched flood water in clean hot water and detergent. Wipe surfaces and vacuum often.
- Remove shoes at the door to keep dirt, germs, and contaminants out.
- Wipe pet paws before bringing pets inside the house.
- If you have a home garden, throw away fruits, vegetables, and herbs affected by flood water into the garbage. Use raised beds and add clean compost or fresh soil when gardening. See this [Public Health fact sheet](#) on gardening after a flood. Information is also available in [Spanish](#).
- If flood waters reached your child's outdoor play area, cover the area with fresh soil or compost.
- Store household cleaners, paints, and other chemicals securely and in areas where future flood waters will not reach them.
- Hazardous household material can include things like paint, cleaning products, and pest control products. If a product label includes CAUTION, WARNING, DANGER, or POISON, then it is hazardous. Choosing safer products will help to avoid the risk of hazardous exposures (see [King County Hazardous Waste Management Program's guidance](#)).
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you have any unusual symptoms after touching flood water.