

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO DURING A FLOOD?

For residents whose homes are flooded

Instructions to reduce health and safety risks

For more information, visit the « [Flooding](#) » section on the Quebec.ca website and the « [In case of flood](#) » guide.



Electricity

Water and electricity combined can cause electrocution or fire hazards.

- Before water floods your home, cut the power while keeping your feet out of the water.
- If water has already infiltrated your home and the power is still on, contact Hydro-Québec (1 800 790-2424).
- Consult a master electrician before :
 - switching the power back on;
 - using any electrical devices that have come into contact with water.



Natural gas

Permanent natural-gas appliances (such as ranges and fireplaces) must be subject to special safety measures. Such appliances can also cause carbon monoxide poisoning.

- When flood waters threaten or if you must evacuate your home;
 - Shut off the main gas inlet, bearing in mind that it will have to be turned back on by a specialist;
 - Shut off the valves on propane cylinders and propane tanks.
- If you smell gas or your natural-gas equipment is broken, leave your home immediately and contact your natural-gas supplier.
- Always use a battery-operated carbon monoxide alarm when using gas appliances (whether there is flooding or not).
- Follow the instructions for combustion appliances (see below) should symptoms appear or an alarm go off.



Combustion appliances

Space heaters, cooking appliances, and barbecues designed for outside use; camping equipment; and nonelectric pumps and generators (gas, gasoline, etc.) can cause severe and life-threatening carbon monoxide poisoning.

- Never use these devices inside your home or near windows or doors.
- Purchase battery-powered carbon monoxide detectors.
- If you notice any symptoms (e.g., headache, dizziness, fatigue, nausea) OR if the alarm rings :
 - Leave your home right away and dial 911;
 - Do not return home until firefighters or an expert have advised that it is safe.



Cold

There is a risk of hypothermia when you get wet or are exposed to cold elements.

- Stay dry and remain in a warm place; keep moving; eat and drink warm food and beverages.
- Consult medical services without delay if you are shivering uncontrollably, have difficulty speaking, experience fatigue or express abnormal behaviour.
- Pay particular attention to young children, seniors and individuals with physical or cognitive disabilities.



Medications

Not taking your medications can worsen your health condition and lead to complications.

- For people who take medications on a continuous, regular basis, make sure to have all the medications required.
- Return the following to a pharmacy (instead of throwing them out) :
 - All medications that have come into contact with floodwater (refill the prescription or purchase new medications);
 - Any medications that weren't refrigerated as prescribed (or consult your pharmacist to determine whether you can still take them).



Food

Food which has been contaminated or remained unrefrigerated may cause food poisoning or gastroenteritis.

- Discard any food which has come into contact with floodwater; purchase other food.
- In the event of a power outage, consult Quebec.ca and the « [Keeping or throwing away food after a power outage or flood](#) » the « [Thermoguide](#) » from ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec.



Floodwater and contaminated materials

Contact with floodwater or contaminated materials may cause skin infections or irritation.

- Avoid skin contact with floodwater or contaminated materials.
- Use soap and clean water to wash any body area that comes into contact with either.
- In the case of deep or dirty wounds, contact your doctor to determine if you need a tetanus shot.



Drinking water

Your drinking water may have been contaminated with microbes or chemicals by the flood and might cause gastroenteritis.

If the source of your drinking is :

- A public water-supply system :
 - It is probably safe for consumption :
 - ✓ Follow your municipality's or supplier's instructions.
- Your well :
 - **Assume that your water is not safe for consumption until proven otherwise.**
 - If your water appears normal (color, smell, taste) :
 - ✓ Boil it for at a rolling boil for at least 1 minute before using it for drinking, cooking, or brushing teeth.
 - If your water is murky or has an unusual smell :
 - ✓ Do not drink it, use bottled water instead.



Stress and anxiety

Any flood can cause a lot of stress and anxiety.

- Dial 811 to reach Info-Santé, if you need help.



Evacuation

The risks in some situations are just too great to ignore. Authorities may have to order an evacuation and ask you to leave your home.

- Follow the instructions given to you by the police and firefighters.

As soon as your home is no longer flooded, consult our fact sheet « [What Should You Do after a Flood?](#) » available at santeestrie.qc.ca/flooding or santemonteregie.qc.ca/en/health-advice/flooding