

Environmental Hazard Facts to Know

Arsenic is an environmental hazard and has been found at high levels in the hurricane stricken area. With a little effort you can make yourself safer from its toxic effects.

Arsenic

→ What is arsenic?

- Arsenic is a metal that is found naturally and is used in several industries. It is a poison.
- **IMPORTANT! CHILDREN 6 YEARS OF AGE AND UNDER ARE VERY MUCH AT RISK OF BEING POISONED BY ARSENIC**

→ Where is arsenic found in flooded areas?

- Arsenic was found in the flood water so anything that was exposed to the flood water should be considered contaminated. This includes soil, standing water, flood mud, and residue on the piles of debris from damaged buildings or homes.

→ How does arsenic get into the body?

- By mouth, breathing in fumes or dust, and through the skin. Burning trash exposed to flood waters or treated wood from decks or playgrounds will produce toxic fumes.

→ What are the symptoms of arsenic exposure?

- Nausea and vomiting, abnormal heart beat, prickly feeling in hands and feet, skin irritation, sore throat. **You should see a doctor if you think you might have been exposed to arsenic.**

→ Is the water you are drinking safe?

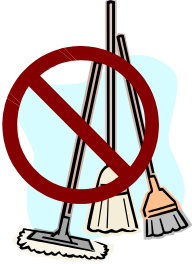
- **IMPORTANT!** Standing flood water is contaminated with many chemicals and bacteria. **You should not drink it or use it for bathing or cleaning.** The best choice is to drink bottled water. **Children should drink only bottled water and not drink tap water.** If you must use tap water you should boil it for at least 3 minutes. You can also treat tap water with plain household chlorine bleach. Add 1/8 teaspoon of bleach to one gallon of water. Mix it thoroughly and let it stand for about 30 minutes before using it.

→ What can you do to keep yourself healthy while working?

- Eat a healthy diet. There is some evidence to suggest that people who do not eat enough protein and other nutrients may not convert the more harmful form of arsenic into the less toxic form of arsenic as easily.
- Drink plenty of clean water. Bottled water is recommended.

How can you protect yourself while working in an arsenic contaminated area?

- CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN SHOULD NOT BE IN THE AREA WHEN REPAIRS AND CLEANING ARE TAKING PLACE.
- Wear protective clothing, waterproof gloves, and protective eyewear.
- Avoid touching face, especially mouth and eyes.
- Use a N95 respirator when cleaning up dust or mud, or when moving debris. These can be found in most home improvement stores. A STANDARD FACE MASK WILL NOT PROTECT YOU.



Don't use a dry broom, a feather duster, or a regular vacuum cleaner because you will kick up and breathe in dust that may contain arsenic and other heavy metals. **All cleaning should be done using wet wiping and wet mopping.**

HERE ARE THE STEPS TO CLEAN FLOORS, WALLS AND OTHER SURFACES:

Step 1. Get supplies:

- ➔ First you will need 3 buckets.
 - Bucket #1 will have clean water and a sudsy detergent like Cascade, TSP or a lead-specific cleaning product. TSP can be found at hardware or home improvement stores. All of these products clean lead better than other products. Follow the instructions on the box when mixing it with clean water.
 - Bucket #2 will have clean water for rinsing.
 - Bucket #3 will be empty. You will put all used, dirty water into bucket #3.
- ➔ You will need a mop for the floors and cotton rags or a sponge for the walls and other surfaces. It is best if the mop is made of cotton but a sponge mop will work too.



Never let the mop or rag touch the water in bucket #3!

Step 2: How to clean:

- ➔ Put the mop, sponge or rag in bucket #1 with the clean water and detergent.
- ➔ Squeeze excess water out in the empty bucket #3.
- ➔ When mopping floor use an "S" motion. When cleaning walls start at the highest point and work down.
- ➔ Rinse the mop, sponge or rag in the clean water in bucket #2 and squeeze the excess water out in dirty bucket #3
- ➔ Repeat these steps several times: Dip in bucket #1, squeeze out excess water in bucket #3, mop floor or clean wall, rinse in clean water bucket #2, squeeze out excess water in bucket #3. Start over.
- ➔ Replace water often – at least every half hour.
- ➔ Dispose of water down the toilet or a large drain. Do not throw it into your yard.
- ➔ Throw away rags and mop.



When you are finished cleaning:

- ➔ Clothes that you were working in should be washed separately in a solution of freshly prepared ¼ cup household bleach in 1 gallon of clean water.
- ➔ Keep shoes and work clothes away from living area.