



Disaster Clean Up Tips

A safe, clean home helps keep kids healthy every day. When disaster strikes, it's important to limit contact with risks and hazards and restore the home environment quickly and safely to help reduce the lasting impact on children. Health threats to children can also linger long after a disaster has passed as risks often hide in affected areas. To address that possibility, try to limit children's access to a disaster site, and never let them explore without an adult as the environment may be emotionally challenging and physically put them in harm's way. Use these tips to help you keep little ones safe and healthy as you begin the recovery process.

1. Be aware of hidden dangers

After a disaster, there are many hidden hazards could put children at risk. Leaking gas, chemicals or carbon monoxide as well as flood water, mold, or fallen power lines may be difficult for children to identify.

2. Stay away from damaged buildings

Structures that have not been examined and approved by an inspector should not be used. This is true even if the building looks unharmed from the outside.

3. Keep children away from dirty water

Keep children and pets away from hazardous sites and floodwater as it's likely to be dirty, carry bacteria, and vulnerable to electric shock.

4. Help children clean up

Wash children's hands frequently (always before meals) and ensure they bathe after being exposed to flood waters or disaster damaged areas. Wash clothes in hot water with detergent. Also, be sure to practice healthy hygiene habits if staying at an emergency shelter or evacuation center.





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5. Ensure utilities are restored

Before children return to disaster-affected areas, ensure utilities such as electricity and plumbing are restored and living and learning spaces (e.g., homes, schools, child care facilities) are free from physical and environmental hazards.

6. Clean or discard contaminated toys

Do not allow children to play with toys that have been contaminated by flood water and have not been disinfected. Materials that cannot be readily disinfected, such as stuffed animals or pillows, should be discarded.

7. Include children when safe to do so

Allowing children to participate in minor clean-up chores helps them feel included in the recovery process. Even young children can help wipe things down and sort items, just be sure they are wearing proper coverings (e.g., rubber gloves, closed shoes, goggles) when they do so. Praise them for help. However, if there is danger at the disaster site (e.g., flood water, mold etc.) keep children away, but find other ways for them to help.



HEALTH ▸ HYGIENE ▸ HOME

RB teams up with Save the Children

Since 2003, RB and Save the Children have worked hand in hand to provide help, hope and support for millions of families around the world. Whether it's building handwashing stations in developing countries, or training children and families in the U.S. to "Get Ready, Get Safe for disaster preparedness," our partnership is critical to the mission of helping kids be kids, no matter what happens.