

Melioidosis prevention during a disaster fact sheet

Protect yourself against melioidosis



Melioidosis is a rare but serious tropical disease caused by bacteria commonly found in soil and water in northern Australia. Sometimes there have been infections in south Queensland.

How can I protect myself from melioidosis?

- ✓ Avoid contact with soil or muddy water, particularly after heavy rain or flooding.
- ✓ Wear waterproof footwear and protective gloves during clean up following flooding events.
- ✓ Wear a mask when using a high-pressure hose around soil or spraying high pressure bore water.
- ✓ Cover wounds or broken skin with waterproof dressings and wash thoroughly after exposure to soil or muddy water.
- ✓ Wash hands regularly with soap and clean water.



The bacteria can enter the body through skin cuts and sores, breathing the bacteria in, or drinking contaminated water.



Melioidosis cases often occur during the wet season after heavy rain and flooding.

Signs and symptoms can develop within days or weeks of exposure to the bacteria and may include:

- fever
- muscle or joint pain
- cough
- headaches
- difficulty breathing
- non-healing ulcers or skin sores.
- weight loss



Melioidosis is rare in healthy adults and children and most people exposed to the bacteria do not get sick

Call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) at any time.

Contact 13 QGOV (13 74 68) for your nearest Public Health Unit.

If you or anyone else shows signs or symptoms of melioidosis, call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) for advice or visit your doctor. If it is an emergency, call 000 immediately.



**Queensland
Government**