

Health concerns after Hurricane Harvey

September 4 2017

Hurricane Harvey and its torrential rains have driven thousands of families from their homes and into local shelters or temporary housing. Now, doctors at Baylor College of Medicine want to keep health setbacks from compounding the misfortune of storm evacuees.

"When people are displaced from their homes, there are general health risks that they may face," said Dr. Shital Patel, assistant professor of medicine - infectious disease at Baylor. Along with concerns for skin rashes, bacterial and [viral infections](#), chronic conditions and infections can flare up in [stressful situations](#), unfamiliar surroundings and crowded conditions. Patel offered advice on managing your health, post-Harvey:

- Maintain control of routine healthcare needs such as checking sugar levels and blood pressure. Being able to get medication in a timely manner is important in a situation like this.
- People with chronic or acute illnesses who have been displaced should check in with shelter physicians or their own doctor as soon as possible.
- Evacuees staying in close quarters may be at particular risk for flood-related infectious diseases. A diarrheal [infection](#) such as Norovirus is definitely a concern because it can be spread rapidly.
- Hand hygiene can help reduce the risk of spread of certain illnesses for you and others.

"The best thing we can recommend is if you yourself feel an [illness](#) coming along or you feel unwell, be evaluated by the medical teams that

are at the shelter. It is best that you are proactive in taking care of yourself physically and mentally through these challenging times," Patel said.

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine

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