

Hurricane safety: Preparing for cleanup before the storm

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Severe weather has many parts of the U.S. on high alert as two storms are expected to make landfall this week. Now is the time to double-check that you are prepared and start thinking about safety after the storm.

Dr. Michael Boniface, a Mayo Clinic emergency medicine physician, says that while most people are aware of the need for batteries, flashlights and bottled water, it is important to ensure essential health care items, such as bandages, gauze, pain relievers, a two week supply of prescriptions medications, and plenty of hand sanitizer, are in an emergency kit.

Additionally, he says, pack appropriate clothes that you may need to aid in cleanup.

"Wearing a long-sleeved shirt; long pants or jeans; hard soled, closed-toe shoes or boots; and thick gloves are a must for after a storm," says Dr. Boniface. "Many of the injuries we see spike are those related to storm cleanup and exploration after the storm, including lacerations, puncture

wounds, falls and chainsaw injuries."

He recommends avoiding do-it-yourself projects, unless you're skilled with the equipment, and staying out of standing water.

"Floodwaters and standing [water](#) are the biggest contributors to [injury](#), illness and death following a storm," says Dr. Boniface. "Aside from a risk of drowning, it's often hard to see what's beneath the surface."

Finally, Dr. Boniface says, make sure you pack bug spray. "It's likely you're going to be exposed to a lot of mosquitoes and other insects that are going to be equally displaced by the [storm](#)."

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