



## Iowa Department of Public Health

Division of Health Promotion & Chronic Disease Prevention

### **Maintaining Healthy Behaviors during Flood Response**

**Overview:** Thousands of Iowans have been impacted by the rising waters of the Missouri River. Many have been working long, stressful hours to protect their homes and communities from the flood waters. Practicing healthy behaviors is important during the stressful time of preparing for and managing flood waters.

#### **Keep these things in mind:**

- **Maintain adequate hydration levels** – Engaging in strenuous activities on hot summer days is a dangerous recipe for dehydration. An easy-to-remember general guideline is to consume eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day. Even mild dehydration can drain your energy and make you feel tired. Staying hydrated can also help to minimize muscle soreness and cramping.
- **Eat well-balanced meals** – Proper nutrition is vitally important to stay healthy. Try to get a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and dairy products. Eat fiber or protein-rich snacks throughout the day to maintain energy levels and help you to feel full longer. Visit [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) for more information.
- **Follow safety precautions to minimize injury** – Working around flood waters can be very physically taxing. Using proper form is crucial for minimizing back and joint injuries, and muscle strains. Be sure to lift with your legs to protect your back and take a few minutes to stretch throughout the day to lessen muscle soreness.
- **Protect your skin** – Wear sunscreen or protective clothing when working outside.
- **Take time to recharge** - Get adequate rest at night and throughout the day. Take breaks to have a snack, rehydrate, and re-energize. Ask others for help if you need it.
- **Manage stress levels** – Preparing for and responding to flooding can be extremely stressful. Take time for yourself to relax and do activities you enjoy. Try to maintain as much of your normal routine as possible and follow the other suggestions listed here to minimize the stress you're experiencing.

Visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/EmergencyResponse/Flooding.aspx](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/EmergencyResponse/Flooding.aspx) for more information.