

How can I stay informed after an earthquake?



During emergencies, too much information, including false or misleading information, can make people feel unsure about what they need to do to protect themselves and those around them.

- Get information, advice and guidance from official sources, such as your national and local health authority.
- Always check the source and analyse the content before sharing it with others.

World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe

UN City, Marmorvej 51,
DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø, Denmark

Tel.: +45 45 33 70 00
Fax: +45 45 33 70 01
Email: eurocontact@who.int
Website: www.who.int/europe

Protecting your health after an earthquake



European Region

What should I do after an earthquake to protect my health and support others?



- Stay informed by using official sources of information. After an earthquake, there may be unpredictable aftershocks, landslides and fires. Aftershocks may occur immediately after the earthquake or

after days, weeks or even months. Follow instructions from your local community and authorities.

- If you need to access a hospital, check official sources to find out which hospitals are functioning. Keep in mind that those with serious injuries and urgent needs will be prioritized. Let healthcare workers know if you have any chronic medical conditions.
- Check the condition of your dwelling. If you consider it unsafe, notify the authorities and go to a temporary shelter or stay with acquaintances or family members.
- If you can, help injured and trapped persons and seek medical attention for them. If you are trained to do so, provide assistance.
- Don't move seriously injured persons unless the surroundings are unsafe, and seek medical help.

What can I do to protect my child's health after an earthquake?



- Check children for injuries, and clean and cover any wounds. Seek medical help if they are injured.
- Keep children in a safe place away from debris. Ensure they are

wearing protective clothing, such as shoes, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when outside. Don't let them play in areas with debris.

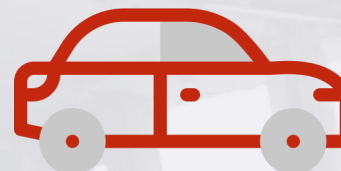
- Show children how to wash their hands with water and soap or an alcohol-based hand rub, if available. Make sure they practice good hand hygiene to protect them from illness.
- Talk to children, listen to them and encourage them to share and express their feelings.

I have a chronic condition. How can I protect myself after an earthquake?



- If possible, carry your medicines in an emergency pack.
- If you do not have your medicine, notify health authorities about your condition and the treatment you are following, so that you can continue treatment.
- If you have a chronic condition with acute complications (e.g. diabetes, hypertension, or a condition requiring dialysis) and cannot get access to your usual medicines, try to get to a healthcare facility as soon as possible.

How can I use a vehicle safely during and after an earthquake?



- If you are in a vehicle when an earthquake occurs, pull over slowly, put on the emergency brake and switch off the engine. Keep your seat belt on until the earthquake has finished.
- Once the worst of the earthquake is over, use your car radio to receive news about evacuation routes, rescue efforts, and instructions for people who are hurt or trapped.
- When it is safe to begin driving again, watch for hazards created by the earthquake. Before taking refuge in a vehicle, assess it for any damage, and look for hazards in the surrounding area, such as damaged buildings and unstable trees.
- If possible, keep roads clear for use by emergency vehicles.
- If your fuel tank has been damaged or you can smell gasoline, exit the car immediately. It can become unsafe, catch fire or explode. You may also be at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

My baby is breastfeeding. What should I do after an earthquake?



Your body can make enough milk for your baby, even in stressful times. If you can, try to breastfeed.

To help your body to breastfeed:

- feed in different positions, if it hurts, get help
- let your baby suckle as long and as often as possible.

To help your baby to breastfeed:

- have a lot of skin-to-skin-contact with baby
- attach your baby to your breast with a wide-open mouth
- ask for support and encouragement
- avoid artificial teats and dummies
- if your baby is not feeding, express milk to keep milk production going
- offer your breasts when your baby is hungry
- gently squeeze your breasts to stimulate the milk flow.

How can I make sure my water is safe to drink after an earthquake?



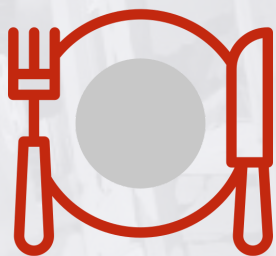
After an earthquake, the water from your tap may be contaminated with microorganisms.

Making sure water is safe is not always easy after an earthquake, but it is essential to keep you and your family healthy.

- If you can, boil water before you use it for drinking, brushing teeth, cleaning wounds and food preparation to prevent the risk of waterborne diseases. After the water has reached a rolling boil, remove the pot or kettle from the heat and allow it to cool naturally. Do not add ice.
- Keep the hot water away from children to avoid scalding.
- Cool and store all boiled water in a clean and covered container. This protects the water from re-contamination.
- You can use tap water for other domestic purposes (e.g. cleaning, laundry) and personal hygiene (e.g. hand washing, bathing, showering).
- If tap water or other local water sources are not available, use bottled water. Make sure that the bottled water you drink is properly sealed before you use it. Do not drink from the bottle if the seal is broken or twisted.

- Wash your hands with soap, especially before and during handling food and after going to the toilet. To be effective, wash your hands for 40–60 seconds with (un-boiled) water and soap, or 20–30 seconds with alcohol-based hand rub, if available.

How can I make sure my food is safe after an earthquake?



After an earthquake, there is a risk of illness from eating food that is contaminated. Unsafe food and water can cause diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps, fever, aches and fatigue and can lead to serious illness.

Making sure water is safe is not always easy after an earthquake, but it is essential to keep you and your family healthy.

- Do not leave cooked food outside the refrigerator for more than 2 hours. Throw away perishable and cooked foods that have not been refrigerated properly due to power outages.
- Plan when to eat different types of food. For example, eat perishable food first.
- Avoid eating food that shows signs of spoilage or has come in contact with contaminated water.
- Keep clean and use boiled or bottled water, if possible.

If there has been a power outage in your area, refrigerated or frozen food may not be safe to eat. After 4 hours of a power cut, the following apply.

- Products can become unsafe if they have been exposed to temperatures above 5C for more than 2 hours. Throw out all perishable foods in your fridge, such as meat, poultry, fish and leftovers.
- Throw out all items in your freezer once they have thawed or cook them, if they have been exposed to ambient temperature for more than 2 hours.
- Never eat food to determine if it is safe. If in doubt, throw it away.
- In case you are unable to store, cook or reheat your food properly, keep a stock of pre-packaged, tinned or ready-to-eat food to eat, if possible.