

*Better Health for Life from
Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network*



Coping With Flooding

An Easton woman shares her experiences and tips

When Lynne and Michael Reismeier bought their home on the Delaware River in Easton in 1995, they knew they were in a flood zone. Because the house was on high ground and no major flood had occurred since the “Great Flood” of 1955, they weren’t too worried. “We were captivated by the wonderful view,” Lynne Reismeier says, “and we looked forward to boating on the river.”

The disadvantage of their dream location became apparent in January 1996, when the river came over the bank. The flood destroyed Reismeier’s landscaping but did not enter the house. Then, during Hurricane Ivan in September 2004, water poured into the basement, ruining the washer, dryer, freezer and oil tank. The family’s well was contaminated.

After months of cleanup and remodeling, the couple took a two-week vacation to Hawaii in April 2005. After they’d arrived, Reismeier’s daughter called to say the river was rising. What should she try to remove from the house before the evacuation order came? This time, water flooded into the living areas as well as the basement. The Reismeiers cut their vacation short and flew home to assess the damage. After extensive repairs, they moved back into their house—only to be evacuated again just a few months later, when a third flood occurred in July 2006.

“You can’t hold back the water,” Reismeier says, “but unlike a fire, you do have time to get valuables out of the house.” Friends and relatives loaded appliances, furniture and clothing on pick-up trucks for storage in their homes and garages. Reismeier laughs that it took months for her to figure out where all her various pieces of furniture and clothing were.

After the most recent flood, the family had to tear up the carpeting, floors, insulation and duct work that they’d just installed following the previous flood. “Tearing up flood-soaked carpet is a time-consuming and messy job,” Reismeier says. “I felt terrible seeing the brand-new carpeting being cut into squares and removed, but I knew it was better to do it then than later.” Clearly not a person to put things off, Reismeier had called her earlier repair crew even while the floodwaters were rising and engaged them to start work as soon as the water receded.

The Reismeiers are still overwhelmed with gratitude for all those who helped. They’re indebted to family, friends, co-workers and the Palmer Kiwanis for countless hours of assistance.

Though she hasn’t stopped loving her life on the river, Reismeier admits that the constant threat of flooding is physically and emotionally stressful. So she and her husband recently purchased property to build a house with access to the river, but farther away and out of the flood zone.



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She and some of her neighbors also have been working with the Delaware Riverside Conservancy to determine the causes of the frequent flooding and see what can be done to change the pattern.

Tips for Coping With Floods

Get good flood insurance.

Repair basement walls to prevent leaks and seepage.

Secure your oil tank to the basement floor so it can't float free and rupture.

Make an inventory of all your possessions with serial numbers and dates of purchase.

If you store things in the basement, place them in plastic boxes with easy-carry handles. Keep the boxes on plastic shelving.

Pack a small bag with your important papers, wallet, cell phones, insurance policy, medications and irreplaceable jewelry.

Enlist the help of friends and relatives to get as much out of the house as you can.

Leave the house as soon as you are told to evacuate.

Don't go back into the house until officials say it is safe to do so.

Keep detailed records of flood damage and repair work.

Photograph everything that was damaged.



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