

## Water contamination

If you have a water tank, be aware that the water is most likely to be contaminated either indirectly by ash, smoke, debris or directly by fire and the firefighting activities. Do not use the water for drinking, preparing food, making ice, washing, bathing or cleaning teeth. Do not provide it to animals.

Please use the water instead to flush toilets, water the garden, wash cars and fight fires. It is dangerous to attempt to remove the contamination, so we do not recommend this. Please refer to the publication Using rainwater after a bushfire, which is available online at [https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/N\\_R/Rainwater-tanks-after-a-bushfire](https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/N_R/Rainwater-tanks-after-a-bushfire)

## Community Support

The Disaster Response Hotline 1800 032 965 has been opened to receive calls for assistance.

## Road Safety

Drivers are to use caution on the Great Southern Highway and local roads as crews may still be working on roads, and to keep in mind there may also be stock over roads due to fence damage in and around the fire area. WA Police will be patrolling the vicinity.

Road information will be available on the Shire of Katanning website at [www.katanning.wa.gov.au](http://www.katanning.wa.gov.au) in the Latest News and may also be available from Main Roads WA by calling 138 138 or visiting [travelmap.mainroads.wa.gov.au](http://travelmap.mainroads.wa.gov.au).

### Useful phone numbers

Shire of Katanning 24/7 Line	9821 9999
Emergencies	000
DFES Information Line	13 33 57
Crime Stoppers	1800 333 000
State Emergency Services (SES)	13 25 50

### Utilities and roads

Western Power	13 13 51
Water Corporation	13 13 75
Telstra	13 22 00
Main Roads WA	13 81 38

### Legal and Insurance Advice

Legal Aid Info Line	1300 650 579
Insurance Council of Australia	1300 728 228
Farmer Assistance Hotline	13 23 16

### Support Services

Disaster Response Hotline	1800 032 965
Lifeline	13 11 14
Crisis Care Helpline	1800 119 008
Rural Financial Counselling	1800 612 004
Regional Men's Health	9690 2277
Rurallink (Beyond Blue)	1800 552 002
The Samaritans	9381 5725
The Salvation Army	9260 9500
Centrelink	132 850
Wildcare Helpline	9474 9055
Red Cross	1800 733 276



## Personal well-being

Traumatic experiences such as being involved in a fire can be sudden and overwhelming. It is normal for people to feel unsettled and disrupted for a while. In most cases there are no signs of physical injury, but there can be a serious emotional toll.

Mental reactions can include trouble thinking clearly, planning and making decisions, as well as constantly

thinking about the fire. Physical reactions can include feeling weak or tired, headaches, shaking, sweating, upset stomach or aches and pains.

Children can also suffer from stress following a fire.

Understanding and recognising your child's responses to these events can assist you in providing support and help them to cope effectively with their feelings, thoughts and behaviours.

## Symptoms of trauma

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Anger
- Fatigue
- Nightmares
- Difficulty concentrating

Most people overcome these feelings within two weeks to a month. If you find you do not return to your normal routine after a few weeks, it is important to seek help from a counsellor or your doctor.

## Looking after yourself

Be aware that you have been through an extremely stressful event and give yourself permission to feel bad and find positive ways to cope. Take care of yourself:

- Get plenty of rest, even if you cannot sleep.
- Try to eat regular, healthy meals and drink lots of water.
- Try to do a little exercise everyday as this helps reduce the physical effects of trauma.
- Avoid using alcohol or drugs to cope.
- Make time to relax.
- It is important for both adults and children to resume normal activities as soon as possible but do not overdo it.
- Avoid making major life decisions too quickly. Focus on making daily decisions to start feeling in control of your life again.
- Avoid becoming isolated. Become involved in community activities.

## Getting support

Most people will recover over time with the support of family and friends. However, sometimes distressing events can be difficult to overcome and professional help may be useful. Seeking assistance is not a sign of weakness, it is another strategy that will help you recover.

### Where to get help

Your doctor is a good place to start. They can also refer you to other service providers who may be able to help. Charitable organisations that may be able to provide assistance with counselling support and referrals are:

Lifeline: 13 11 14 (24/7 Telephone Crisis

Support)

Samaritans Crisis Line: 13 52 47 or 1800 198 313 (24/7 Crisis Line)

Disaster Relief Hotline: 1800 032 965

