



Landslides

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Key facts

- A landslide is the mass movement of rock, debris, earth or mud down a slope. It can be caused by rainfall, earthquakes, droughts, volcanic eruption or erosion. Debris flows are also known as mudslides.
- Climate change and rising temperatures are expected to trigger more landslides, especially in cold mountainous areas, as the melting snow and ice make the rocky slopes more unstable.
- In the days, weeks (and sometimes months) following a landslide, the main health concerns include diarrhoeal diseases, vector-borne diseases, respiratory and skin infections.

Main health impacts

Health concern	Risk factors
Trauma (injuries) and high mortality from injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapidly flowing water and debris can cause high mortality and injuries. The most common cause of death in a landslide is trauma or suffocation by entrapment. • Broken power or gas pipes can also result in injuries like electrocution and burns.
Transmission of infectious diseases: vector-borne diseases, food-borne and water-borne diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken water or sewage pipes due to a landslide can affect the quality and amounts of water supply, and therefore contribute to an increase in diarrheal diseases. • After a landslide, the water supply, sanitation and disposal of waste might be disrupted leading to poorer hygiene conditions. This can increase the presence of mosquitos and therefore an increase in diseases such as malaria. A proliferation of vectors such as flies could contribute to increased transmission of food-borne diseases. • Displacement of people following a landslide can lead to disrupted access to clean water or latrines, increasing the risk of water-borne and food-borne diseases.
Short- and long-term mental health effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landslides can have a high psychosocial and mental health impact, especially for directly affected people.
Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landslides can have a devastating effect on farmers' livelihoods by preventing access to land for years. They can lead to a loss of seed and food stocks and result in the loss of livestock and crops, which can increase the risk of malnutrition in the affected community.

Disease tools that may be relevant

- [_> Acute diarrhoea](#)
- [_> Cholera](#)
- [_> Hepatitis A](#)
- [_> Hepatitis E](#)
- [_> Typhoid fever](#)
- [_> Meningococcal meningitis](#)
- [_> Poliomyelitis \(polio\)](#)
- [_> Yellow fever](#)
- [_> Chikungunya](#)
- [_> Dengue fever](#)
- [_> Malaria](#)
- [_> Zika virus infection](#)
- [_> Acute respiratory infections \(ARIs\)](#)
- [_> Plague](#)
- [_> Leptospirosis](#)