




# TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF DURING CLEAN UP

## Mold and Mildew

After a hurricane or flood, excess moisture and standing water contribute to the growth of mold in homes and other buildings. If your home has been flooded, you can assume that it has been contaminated with mold which may become a health risk for you and your family.

You may recognize mold by sight and smell—

- ▼ Are the walls and ceilings discolored or show signs of mold growth or water damage?
- ▼ Do you smell a bad odor, such as a musty earthy smell or a foul stench?

Health Effects of Mold Exposure	Cleaning and Drying Out Your Home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Stuffy nose, sneezing, red eyes and skin rash</li> <li>▶ Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath</li> <li>▶ Allergic reactions to mold including asthma attacks</li> <li>▶ People with weakened immune systems or chronic lung diseases may develop mold infections in their lungs.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Open doors and windows. Let your home air out for at least 30 minutes, before you stay inside for any length of time. Use fans to dry out your home.</li> <li>2. Remove all items that have been wet for more than 48 hours and that cannot be cleaned and dried thoroughly.</li> <li>3. Examples of absorbent items that cannot be cleaned are: carpets and carpet padding, upholstery, wall paper, dry wall, floor and ceiling tiles, insulation material, clothing, leather, paper, books, wood and food.</li> <li>4. To remove mold from hard surfaces mix 1 cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water and wash with the mixture. Use a stiff brush to scrub rough surfaces and rinse with clean water. Dry the item or leave it out to air dry.</li> <li>5. To <i>prevent</i> mold growth, clean all wet items and surfaces with detergent and water and fix any water problems such as leaks in roofs, walls or plumbing.</li> <li>6. Turning on air conditioners or heaters can spread mold spores and make the problem worse. Clean these before use.</li> <li>7. If you wish to disinfect your home, refer to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) brochure, "A Brief Guide to Mold and Moisture in Your Home" <a href="http://www.epa.gov/mold">http://www.epa.gov/mold</a>.</li> </ol>
	<b>Flood Water</b>
	<p>Flood water may be contaminated by waste from overflowing sewage systems as well as toxic waste from cars and industrial plants. Do not eat or drink anything that has been contaminated by flood water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ If an <b>open cut or wound</b> is in contact with flood water, clean it with soap and water and use an antibacterial ointment to lower your risk of infection.</li> <li>▶ <b>Wash dishes, linens and clothes</b> contaminated by flood water in hot water and detergent. Run the washing machine or dishwasher through one full hot water cycle using a disinfectant or sanitizer, before you wash clothes or dishes.</li> <li>▶ <b>Do not allow children to play</b> in places or with toys that have been in contact with flood water. Disinfect contaminated toys by cleaning them with a cleaning mixture with one cup of bleach to five gallons of water.</li> </ul>

For more information on recovery and health concerns, visit the **Red Cross** website at: [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters).