



AFTER THE FLOOD

Emergency Health Precautions for Flooded Areas

Personal

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling contaminated materials, especially before touching your face and preparing or eating food
- Report any diarrhea, upset stomach, or sudden illness to your doctor or public health professional
- Do not allow children to play in or around flood waters

Power

- Shut off electrical power and natural gas or propane tanks to avoid fire, electrocution, or explosions
- Leave your home immediately if you smell gas or suspect a leak

Flooded, Frozen, and Refrigerated Food

- Do not eat any food that may have come in contact with flood water
- Store-bought canned foods that are undamaged can be saved by removing any labels followed by a thorough wash and disinfection of the can
- Home-canned foods that were in contact with flood water should be thrown away
- If your refrigerator or freezer is out, ask friends, family, and businesses with power if they can store some or all of your food
- Most thawed food can be eaten or refrozen if kept cold
- Throw out any food that has been at room temperature for 2+ hours
- Refrigerators can keep food cool for about 4 hours without power kept if unopened

When in doubt, throw it out!

Mold in Homes

About Mold

- Can travel through the air and trigger allergic reactions, asthma, infections, and other respiratory illnesses
- Thrives and multiplies in moist environments
- Often appears white, orange, green, or black
- Commonly found on water damaged floors, walls, and ceilings
- Usually accompanied with a musty, earthy odor

High Risk Individuals

- Infants and children
- Immuno-compromised patients
- Elderly
- Pregnant women



Common Symptoms of Mold Exposure

- Wheezing and difficulty breathing
- Nasal and sinus congestion
- Burning, watering, or reddening of eyes
- Blurred vision and light sensitivity
- Dry, hacking cough
- Nose, throat, or skin irritation
- Aches and pains
- Fever

General Cleanup

1. Put on personal protective equipment: gloves, safety glasses/goggles, N95-N100 respirator. Use half-face negative-pressure respirators or powered air-purifying respirators if available for more protection.
2. Discard all porous materials that have mold growth.
3. Non-porous materials, such as glass, plastic, or metal, can be kept after a thorough clean and disinfection.
4. Remove any visible mold by wiping or scrubbing the affected area with warm water and detergent.
5. Disinfect the surface with a 10% bleach solution (1 cup bleach to 1 gallon water) to kill any remaining mold.
6. Allow the surface to air-dry.

For more information or assistance, please contact the Office of
Environmental Health and Engineering at (907) 543-6420

This factsheet was created using the North Dakota Department of Health's handouts on flood clean up.