



## Indoor MOLD and MILDEW After Hurricane Katrina

### People at Greatest Risk for Health Effects from Mold:

- People with asthma, allergies, or other breathing conditions may be more sensitive to mold.
- People with immune suppression (such as people with HIV infection, cancer patients taking chemotherapy, and people who have received an organ transplant) are more susceptible to mold infections.

### Possible Health Effects of Mold Exposure:

- People allergic to mold may have a stuffy nose, irritated eyes, wheezing, or skin irritation, difficulty breathing and shortness of breath.
- People with weakened immune systems and with chronic lung diseases, such as obstructive lung disease, may develop mold infections in their lungs.
- If you or your family members have health problems after exposure to mold, contact your doctor or other health care provider.

### Recognizing Mold

You may recognize mold by:

- Sight (Are the walls and ceiling discolored, or do they show signs of mold growth or water damage?)
- Smell (Do you smell a bad odor, such as a musty, earthy smell or a foul stench?)
  - Moldy smells are a sign of molds and mildews, even if you cannot see them. If a building smells moldy, check for hidden molds and moisture.

### Cleaning up Mold and Mildew

Mold and mildew readily grow in damp conditions, particularly in wet areas. Wet materials must be removed and the building dried completely.

- Remove standing water. Clean up and dry out the building as soon as possible. Open doors and windows. Where possible, use fans to dry out the building.
- If your home has been flooded, it may be contaminated with mold. Consider wearing a N95 designated face mask, rubber boots, rubber gloves and goggles inside your home when working with moldy materials.
- **When in doubt, take it out!** Remove and throw away all porous items that have been wet. These items can remain a source of mold growth and should be removed from the home.
- Remove and throw away all wet carpet and padding.

- Bedding, mattresses, pillows, and upholstered furniture that are wet should be removed and thrown away. Launder all other clothing, sheets, and towels in hot soapy water.
- Remove all wet sheetrock, paneling, fiberglass or cellulose insulation and other porous wallboards. Remove at least 12 inches of wall board above the water line or the damp area because of “wicking” of water up the walls. Clean wall studs after removing wallboards and allow studs to dry completely.
- Wash non-porous materials with soap and water and a stiff brush followed by a solution of chlorine bleach and water. Nonporous materials include tile floors, countertops, metal objects, plastic, glass and other hard nonabsorbent materials. Concrete and brick surfaces may also be cleaned this way. Dry completely.
- Remove mold growth from hard surfaces with soap and water, and disinfect with a bleach solution of 1 to 2 cups of bleach in 1 gallon of water. Repeat clean up and removal procedures as needed.
  - **Never mix bleach with ammonia.** Mixing bleach and ammonia can produce dangerous, toxic fumes.
  - Open windows and doors to provide fresh air and ventilate the area.
  - Wear non-porous gloves and protective eye wear.
- Materials that cannot be effectively cleaned and dried should be placed in plastic garbage bags for disposal.
- Valuable items such as books, wood furniture, or papers should be discarded if it cannot be cleaned. Saving damaged items may require hiring professionals such as conservators who are familiar with cleaning and restoration techniques.
- Check your air conditioning and heating systems for damage. Discard wet or water-damaged filters. You may need to hire a professional to inspect your system or to clean vents and air ducts.
- High humidity can cause mold growth even in areas not directly in contact with floodwaters. Mold may be behind furniture, under carpeting, under wood floors, behind and under cabinets, in closets and attics or in between walls.
- Contact a professional mold remediation consultant for further advice.

*Adapted by the Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals from the US Department of Health & Human Services, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, September 15, 2005.*

*For more information, visit <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/>*

*Or call the Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals at 1-888-293-7020*