

## POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Mold growth, after flooding or other water damage, is a major health concern. It is often associated with a musty, mildew odor, visible evidence of mold growth on walls, floors, carpeting, and other water damaged items.
- Allergies or asthma-like symptoms may develop for some persons from exposure to molds, bacteria, and other biological contaminants that occur after a flood or other water damage.
- Discard any water-damaged furnishings such as carpet, drapes, stuffed toys, upholstered furniture, mattresses, wicker furniture, ceiling tiles, and other porous items unless they can be steam cleaned or washed in hot water and dried thoroughly
- Remove wet insulation and reduce moisture in crawl spaces through ventilation and covering the crawl space floor with moisture resistant material.
- Mold cannot grow without moisture. (Make sure excess moisture in your home is addressed within 24-48 hours. Moisture present for longer can promote mold growth).
- Mold is a symptom of a larger problem
- If you cannot determine the source of moisture causing the mold problem, contact a professional consultant.
- Contact your local public health department for resources to help deal with a mold issue.

## PREVENTION: THE GOAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Cleaning walls and floors can prevent growth of mold and mildew.

- Clean thoroughly, removing all dirt, wash with detergent and water. Then sanitize using ¼ cup bleach to 1-gallon water solution.
- Wear gloves and rubber boots for all cleaning and sanitizing.
- Avoid detergents that contain phosphates as they can leave a residue that could provide nutrients for future mold and mildew growth.
- Clean upholstered furniture with commercially available upholstery cleaning equipment.

## FOR INFORMATION CALL:

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### Vernon County Health Department

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### Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02167.pdf>

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/mold/default.htm>

# *The Facts About Environmental Hazards*



# *And What You Can Do to Fix Them*

### Health Concerns

Health effects associated with airborne mold exposure are:

1. Allergic reactions
2. Eye and respiratory irritation
3. Infection and toxicity

Only about 10%+ of the population is allergic to one or more types of molds and can be effected by indoor and outdoor exposure. Respiratory mold infection can occur but is rare and limited almost exclusively to immune-compromised patients. Toxicity is related to the ability of some molds to produce mycotoxins. There is not sufficient evidence to link health effects to indoor exposure to airborne mycotoxins. Ingestion of moldy foods has resulted in illness. If you suspect illness seek treatment and advice from a medical doctor.

### FUTURE CONCERNS

The major health concern is the growth of molds, bacteria, and other biological contaminants often associated with a musty, mildew odor and visible mold growth on walls, colors, carpeting and other water damaged items. It is important that items contributing to mold and bacterial growth be cleaned and dried as soon as possible. If this is not possible the item(s) should be discarded.

If the information you are looking for cannot be found in this publication, contact the Wisconsin Division of Public Health, Bureau of Environmental Health, PO Box 2659, Madison, WI 53701-2659, (608) 266-1120, or email the webmaster at [webmaildph@dhfs.state.wi.us](mailto:webmaildph@dhfs.state.wi.us) .

### PREVENT INJURY

1. Avoid ALL downed power lines, especially those in water.
2. Ventilate Emergency Generators
3. Avoid wading in water without proper foot protection
4. Use boats with caution because submerged items may not be visible
5. Wear insect repellent and remove any standing water
6. Avoid dogs and cats you do not know
7. Be aware of wild animals because of rabies concern
8. Carefully inspect buildings before reentering.
9. If injured, tetanus vaccine may be necessary. Check with Physician or Local Health Department

### SEWAGE DISPOSAL

\*If water and sewage disposal are not working, use portable toilets, or facilities at the emergency site.

\* Sewage may back flow from your septic or municipal system through floor drains into basements. This area MUST be disinfected with a chlorine solution. If this has happened, anything that cannot be cleaned should be discarded.

### CORRECTING WATER DAMAGE

1. Seal all leaks in ceilings, walls, and foundations and correct improper surface drainage.
2. Reduce moisture in crawl spaces by ventilation or covering the crawl space floor with a moisture resistant material.
3. Discard water-damaged furnishing such as carpet, drapes, stuffed toys, upholstered furniture, mattresses, wicker furniture, ceiling tiles, and other porous items unless they can be cleaned by steam cleaning or hot water washing and thorough drying. Remove and replace wet insulation to prevent conditions where biological pollutants can grow.
4. Scrub surfaces and floors with water and non-phosphorus detergent.
5. Various strengths of bleach solutions are recommended for disinfecting.
6. Proper Safety Precautions must be observed to prevent skin, eye and respiratory damage when bleach is used.