



Bald Head Association Resources

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Mold After Heavy Rains & Flooding

Mold, a kind of microscopic fungus, is everywhere in the environment, both indoors and out. Mold spores exist in the air as tiny particles. After heavy rains and flooding, the excess moisture is a nursery for germinating mold spores.

Any surface containing organic matter can be affected by mold, including wood, drywall, fabric, furnishings and carpeting. Mold growth may compromise a building structure's integrity. Appliances such as refrigerators, freezers, stoves, dishwashers, hot water heaters, washing machines and driers contain insulation and could harbor mold spores without any visible evidence and should be discarded.

Heating and air conditioning filters need to be changed, and the system ductwork should be inspected by a professional.

According to FEMA, "Water can wick up higher than the visible water line. The best practice is to remove the wall board at least two feet above the water line. Check local building codes for specific guidance."

FEMA states, "Non-porous surfaces, including glass, ceramic, metal and plastic, may be cleaned. A 10% solution of household bleach and soap or detergent may be used to wash down walls, floors and other mold-contaminated areas."

Any materials containing mold should be removed, bagged carefully and disposed of properly.

Health Alert

Mold can affect people differently. People with suppressed or weakened immune systems, along with infants, children and the elderly, may be at greater risk. Though the Minnesota Department of Health states, "Long-term exposure to high levels from indoor mold growth can eventually be unhealthy for anyone."

If you feel your health is being affected by a moldy environment, contact a medical professional immediately.

What To Wear

Health and government agencies have these tips on protecting yourself while working with mold:

- Wear an "N-95" or a N100 type disposable respirator (available from safety equipment suppliers, hardware stores or some building supply stores).
- Use rubber gloves.
- Wear eye goggles that seal out fine dust-like materials.
- Wear outer clothing (long-sleeved shirts and long pants) that can be easily removed before leaving the work area. Launder or discard these clothes.

"Indoor mold can trigger allergies or allergy-like symptoms affecting the upper respiratory system. Common complaints are:

- nasal and sinus congestion
- cough
- wheezing/breathing difficulties
- skin and eye irritation
- upper respiratory infections, including sinus infections"

Cautions While Cleaning:

- NEVER mix bleach with ammonia or other household cleaner. Doing so will produce dangerous, toxic fumes.
- Open windows and doors to provide fresh air. Use fans to dry out the building. Position fans to blow air out doors or windows.
- Wear non-porous gloves and protective eye wear.
- Always follow the manufacturer's label instructions for any cleaning product.