

# Prevent Mold from Becoming a Secondary Disaster

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Delayed cleanup of mold caused by flooding can result in several types of health hazards but cleaning up safely is important.

## Problems Associated with Mold

- **Medical:** Mold spores are microscopic organisms that can float through the air and cause problems with allergies, asthma, infections, and other respiratory issues. Anyone can suffer from medical issues related to mold. However, infants and children, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems may experience more severe reactions. People with breathing problems like asthma or who have weakened immune systems should stay away from moldy sites.
- **Home:** If your home has mold, everything that has been contaminated must be cleaned properly and dried. Items that cannot be properly cleaned and dried within 24-48 hours must be removed and thrown away, including structural and personal property. Children should not take part in disaster cleanup work. It is possible to have mold damage, despite no other visible damages.

## How to Remove Mold and Repair Your Home

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) offers tips on cleaning mold after disasters.

- 8 Tips to Cleanup Mold
  - **Protect yourself.** Put on personal protective equipment (gloves, mask, goggles) to protect your eyes, nose, mouth, and skin.
  - **Toss! Take it out!** Anything that was wet with flood water and can't be cleaned and dried out completely within 24 to 48 hours should be taken outside. Take photos of discarded items for filing insurance claims.
  - **Air it out.** Open all doors and windows when you are working and leave as many open as you safely can when you leave.



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- **Circulate.** When electricity is safe to use, use fans and dehumidifiers to remove moisture.
- **Don't mix cleaners.** If you use cleaning products, do not mix cleaning products together. DO NOT mix bleach and ammonia because it can create toxic vapors.
- **Scrub surfaces.** Clean with water and a detergent. Remove all mold you can see. Dry right away.
- **Don't cover it, remove it.** Painting or caulking over mold will not prevent mold from growing. Fix the water problem completely and clean up all the mold before you paint or caulk.
- **Dry it up.** Dry your home and everything in it as quickly as possible – within 24 to 48 hours if you can.
- Additional resources:
  - [Homeowner's and Renter's Guide to Mold Cleanup After Disasters | Mold | CDC](#)
  - [Guía del propietario y arrendatario para la limpieza de moho \(hongos\) después de desastres | Mold | CDC](#)
    - [What to Wear Español](#)
    - [8 Tips to Clean up Mold Español](#)
    - [When to use bleach](#)

For the latest information on Florida's recovery from Hurricane Idalia, visit [floridadisaster.org/updates/](https://floridadisaster.org/updates/) and [fema.gov/disaster/4734](https://fema.gov/disaster/4734). Follow FEMA on X, formerly known as Twitter, at [twitter.com/femaregion4](https://twitter.com/femaregion4) and at [facebook.com/fema](https://facebook.com/fema).



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