

Mold and Flooded Homes

If your house has been in a flood there's a good chance you will end up with a mold problem. However there are steps you can take to try to prevent mold growing in your home after it's been flooded.

Hiring Professional Mold or Flood Clean Up Experts

After a flood the best thing you can do is contact a mold remediation company or water damage specialist who performs clean ups of flooded homes.

This way you can be sure that all mold problems will be properly taken care of. You will also have the peace of mind of knowing that your home will be completely safe to continue living in after it's been professionally remediated.

Preventing Mold After a Flood

Mold can start to grow after just a day or two so it's important to act as quickly as possible if your home has been flooded. Make sure you only enter your home once it's safe though.

If you're going to perform the flood clean up yourself then you should begin by moving things outside that didn't get wet. This is to protect them while you clean up the rest of the house.

Removing Flood Water

Next you need to remove as much floodwater from your home as you can. You can use things like buckets and mops. You can even pump the water out with pumping equipment if you have any, as long as it's safe to use it. The fire department might also be able to help you by pumping water out of your home. Also remove any dirt, mud or other debris that came into your house during the flood.

Drying out Your Home After a Flood

The sooner you can dry out your home after a flood the better. This way you can minimize any mold problems and perhaps even prevent mold growing at all.

Using things like dehumidifiers, fans or heaters helps to dry out your home faster. First make sure it's safe to use electrical appliances though. If the air outside isn't very humid then open windows to ventilate your house.

Removing Flooded Carpet

If carpet in your home got wet then you need to get rid of it. The padding on the back of carpet takes a very long time to dry out if it gets saturated and will end up smelling bad and leading to mold growth.

[Removing Mold on Carpet](#) tells you more about how to remove wet or moldy carpet from your home.

Removing Flooded Drywall

Mold can start to grow on the walls, or inside the wall cavities, of rooms that were flooded. If a room with drywall walls was flooded then you'll need to cut away the bottom section of drywall that's at least 30cm (12 inches) above where it got wet.

If you see mold growing on any drywall then you'll also have to cut away the drywall and remove it. Mold cannot be properly cleaned from porous materials like drywall. Once you've removed wet or moldy drywall from your home you should dispose of it.

[Removing Mold on Drywall](#) has more information on how to remove wet or moldy drywall from your home.

Other Building Materials

Other porous building materials that got wet, such as wall panelling, should be removed too. Wood which got wet should usually be alright to keep using once it's dried out as long as there is no mold growing on it.

[Removing Mold on Wood](#) talks about how to clean wood that does have mold on it.

Like carpet, insulation also takes too long to dry out so you should throw away any insulation that got wet during the flood.

Although you should remove any wet building materials as soon as possible after a flood, make sure the house is fully dried out before you install new materials to replace them. Wall cavities especially shouldn't be sealed back up until it is completely dry inside.

Removing Flooded or Moldy Items

Next you should take any things that got wet during the flood, such as furniture and boxes, out of your home. Make sure you don't move these wet items to somewhere else inside your house as that can spread the mold problem. Instead take them straight outside. Putting these objects in plastic bags, if possible, before you move them is also a good idea to help prevent mold spreading.

You will have to decide whether to throw these things away or to clean them and set them aside for when you are ready to bring them back inside.

Once surfaces in your home have dried you can begin to clean and disinfect them. Regular household cleaners and disinfectants are generally alright to use. Antifungal solutions can also be used to prevent mold.

There are a number of effective antifungal and mold killing solutions at the [Killing Mold](#) page.

During the cleanup process you need to wash and disinfect every surface in your home including floors, walls, shelves and closets.

Cleaning Wet or Moldy Items

Hard surfaced, non-porous items which don't absorb water can be cleaned using detergents. After these items are dried it is safe to return them to your home without having to worry about them causing mold.

It's best to throw away porous items which absorbed water and which can't be dried thoroughly within 24-48 hours. Also any objects with mold growing on them and which can't be properly cleaned should be thrown out.

Clothes and bedding can be washed in your washing machine and kept. If any of your clothes have mold on them you can see information about removing the mold at [Mold on Clothes](#).

Removing Mold Caused by Flooding

Perhaps mold has already started to grow in your home. In this case you should try to contain moldy areas so that mold spores don't spread to the rest of your house. There is more about containment and removing mold at [Mold Removal](#).

You shouldn't begin the mold removal process until after your home has dried out and you have removed any dirt and debris from inside. You also need to complete the mold remediation before you occupy your house again.

Moving Back into Your Home After a Flood

Before you move back into your home it must be dried out and mold free. Make sure to only move your things back inside once they are completely dried out. They should also have no mold on them.

Also inspect your home for any signs of mold. If you find any moldy items inside you will need to take them outside and clean them or throw them away. Any mold growing on surfaces in your home must be removed too.

Look out for any moldy odors as well or any sign that you are suffering symptoms from mold. If so then there's probably mold growing somewhere inside which you need to find and get rid of. Here you can find information on [Mold Symptoms](#).

The best idea is to get a professional or an expert to inspect (and perhaps mold test) your home for you to let you know for certain that it's alright to resume living in.

More information about [Mold Inspection](#)

More information about [Mold Testing](#)

Looking out for Mold Signs After a Flood

After cleaning up from a flood there's still a good chance that mold might start growing sometime in the near future. Flood water can remain in the ground around your house and affect the foundation. Water which seeps up through the foundation can end up in the walls and the floorboards and lead to hidden mold. In this case you'll eventually notice a mold odor or start to feel the health effects.

This is why it's important to stay alert for mold or any signs of mold. There is more about signs of mold growing in the home at the [Signs of Mold](#) page.

You might want to inspect your home again sometime soon, particularly if you notice signs that there could be mold in your home. Again, it's best to hire experts to inspect and mold test your home for you.