



**American
Red Cross**

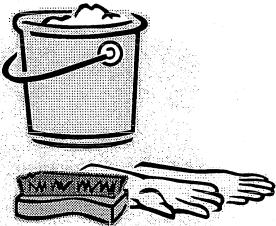
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF DURING CLEAN UP

Mold and Mildew

After a hurricane or flood, excess moisture and standing water contribute to the growth of mold in homes and other buildings. If your home has been flooded, you can assume that it has been contaminated with mold which may become a health risk for you and your family.

You may recognize mold by sight and smell—

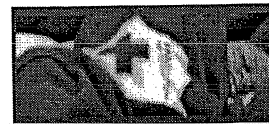
- ▼ Are the walls and ceilings discolored or show signs of mold growth or water damage?
- ▼ Do you smell a bad odor, such as a musty earthy smell or a foul stench?

Health Effects of Mold Exposure	Cleaning and Drying Out Your Home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Stuffy nose, sneezing, red eyes and skin rash ▶ Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath ▶ Asthma attacks in people with asthma who are allergic to mold ▶ People with weakened immune systems or chronic lung diseases may develop mold infections in their lungs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open doors and windows. Let your home air out for at least 30 minutes, before you stay inside for any length of time. Use fans to dry out your home. 2. Remove all items that have been wet for more than 48 hours and that cannot be cleaned and dried thoroughly. 3. Examples of absorbent items that cannot be cleaned are: carpets and carpet padding, upholstery, wall paper, dry wall, floor and ceiling tiles, insulation material, clothing, leather, paper, books, wood and food. 4. To remove mold from hard surfaces mix 1 cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water and wash with the mixture. Use a stiff brush to scrub rough surfaces and rinse with clean water. Dry the item or leave it out to air dry. 5. To <i>prevent</i> mold growth, clean all wet items and surfaces with detergent and water and fix any water problems such as leaks in roofs, walls or plumbing. 6. Turning on air conditioners or heaters can spread mold spores and make the problem worse. Clean these before use. 7. If you wish to disinfect your home, refer to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) brochure, "A Brief Guide to Mold and Moisture in Your Home" http://www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/images/mold_guide.pdf
	Flood Water
	<p>Flood water may be contaminated by waste from overflowing sewage systems as well as toxic waste from cars and industrial plants. Do not eat or drink anything that has been contaminated by flood water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ If an open cut or wound is in contact with flood water, clean it with soap and water and use an antibacterial ointment to lower your risk of infection. ▶ Wash dishes, linens and clothes contaminated by flood water in hot water and detergent. Run the washing machine or dishwasher through one full hot water cycle using a disinfectant or sanitizer, before you wash clothes or dishes. ▶ Do not allow children to play in places or with toys that have been in contact with flood water. Disinfect contaminated toys by cleaning them with a cleaning mixture with one cup of bleach to five gallons of water.

For more information on hurricane recovery and health concerns, visit the **Red Cross** website at:
katrina.redcross.org
 or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR EMOTIONAL HEALTH

After a Disaster



Each positive action you take can help you feel better and more in control

Disasters can bring about significant stress. This is especially true if you have experienced a previous disaster. The good news is that many people have experience coping with stressful life events and are naturally resilient—meaning we are designed to “bounce back” from difficult times. In the days following a disaster, it is common for you, your family and friends to experience a variety of reactions. Feelings of exhaustion, worry, and anger can surface, especially if you’ve had to leave your home or have had to contend with the frustrations of having no electricity, have had to clean up disaster debris, or have had to wait in long lines for disaster assistance... Here is some information on how to recognize your current feelings and tips for taking care of the emotional health of you, your family and friends.

What You May Be Feeling Now

When we experience a disaster or other stressful life event, we can have a variety of reactions, all of which may be common responses to difficult situations. These reactions can include:

- Feeling physically and mentally drained
- Frustration occurring more quickly and more often
- Feeling tired, sad, numb, lonely, or worried
- Having difficulty making decisions or staying focused on topics
- Arguing more with family and friends
- Experiencing changes in appetite or sleep patterns
- Becoming easily frustrated, on a frequent basis

Most of these reactions are temporary and will go away over time. Try to accept whatever reactions you may have. Look for ways to take one step at a time and focus on taking care of your disaster related needs and those of your family.

Taking Action

Getting ourselves and our lives back in a routine that is comfortable for us takes time. Each positive action you take can help you feel better and more in control. Here are some helpful tips that may help put your priorities in place and help you take care of yourself and your loved ones:

- **Take care of your safety.** Find a safe place to stay and make sure your physical health needs and those of your family are addressed. Seek medical attention, if necessary.
- **Eat healthy.** During times of stress it is important that you maintain a balanced diet and drink plenty of water.
- **Get some rest.** With so much to do, it may be difficult to have enough time to rest or get adequate sleep. Giving your body and mind a break can boost your ability to cope with the stress you may be experiencing.
- **Stay connected with family and friends.** Giving and getting support is one of the most important things you can do.
- **Be patient with yourself and with those around you.** Recognize that everyone is stressed and may need some time to put their feelings and thoughts in order.
- **Set priorities.** Tackle tasks in small steps.
- **Gather information** about assistance and resources that will help you and your family members meet your disaster-related needs.
- Finally, **stay positive.** Remind yourself of how you've successfully gotten through difficult times in the past. Reach out when you need support, and help others when they need it.

If You Still Don't Feel Better

Many people have experience coping with stressful life events and typically feel better after a few days. Others find that the stress does not go away as quickly as they would like and it influences their relationships with their family, friends and others. If you find yourself or a loved one experiencing some of the feelings and reactions listed below for two weeks or more, this may be a sign that you need to reach out for additional assistance.

- Crying spells or bursts of anger
- Increased physical symptoms, such as headaches, stomachaches,
- Feeling guilty, helpless or hopeless
- Difficulty eating and sleeping
- Fatigue
- Avoiding family and friends
- Losing interest in things

For additional resources, contact your local Red Cross Disaster Mental Health or community mental health professional.

Please seek **immediate** help if you or someone you know is feeling that life isn't worth living or if you are having thoughts of