

Mold Removal

[Stefany Strong, Health Reporter] Lake Ruby has been a joy for the families in this DeLand neighborhood for years but after 3 hurricanes and torrential rains within a two month period, Lake Ruby reached its limit and overflowed into area homes. Homes like this one belonging to Ken and Sue Royer. Now their first floor is filled with dark and smelly lake water. Flood water that is causing a major mold problem inside the house.

[Sue Royer, homeowner] It's going to be a struggle but we know we have to do it in order to not only have our home livable, but to possibly prevent other illnesses which might occur as a result of the mold, the mildew. It can get in the air, our air-conditioning vents, so we are a little worried.

[Stefany Strong, Health Reporter] Let's join Sue Royer as she cleans up her house. Sue is armed with a cleaning bucket, cleaning supplies and she is using the after the storm cleanup tips from the Volusia County Health Department's Environmental Health team. It is essential to conduct proper cleanup after flooding.

[Robert Maglievez, Volusia County Health Department Indoor Air Quality Expert] Well the message to people with flooding is that all is not lost. If you take action soon you can save a lot of your stuff. Of course we don't want people going into this kind of situation and risking their health but if you are looking at maybe some soaked carpet or maybe one part of the wall got wet or you got a roof that perhaps is leaking and you can get stuff out of the way you can clean that material as long as you do it in kind of a planned methodical way.

[Stefany Strong, Health Reporter] What can I save? What should I toss? Porous material can trap mold. Items such as paper, rags, wallboard, and rotten wood should be thrown out. Harder materials such as glass, plastic, and metal can be kept after they are cleaned and disinfected. Remove moldy materials. Wear a filter mask and gloves to avoid contact with mold. Carpeting can be a difficult problem. Drying does not remove the dead spores. If the carpet is wet for more than 48 hours, then it should be removed. If there is heavy mold, disposal of the carpet should be considered.

Allow areas to dry 2 to 3 days before replacing damaged materials. If sheet rock or wall board is flooded, remove all sheet rock to at least 12 inches above the high water mark.

[Robert Maglievez, Volusia County Health Department Indoor Air Quality Expert] It is important to clean up the right way for 2 main reasons. One is you want to protect your house from spreading the material all over the rest of the house. In other words if you've only got one contaminated area, you don't want that contamination to go to another place. And secondly and more importantly, you want to protect your own health so you don't want to become a victim while you are trying to save your furniture.

[Stefany Strong, Health Reporter]
General mold cleanup procedures:

- Identify and correct the moisture source.
- Remove all water and fix any leaks before cleaning.
- Clean, disinfect, and dry the moldy area.
- Bag and dispose of any material that has moldy residue, such as rags, paper, leaves, or debris.

Soap cleanup:

- Wear protective gloves and a filter mask.
- Use non ammonia soap or detergent or a commercial cleaner in hot water.
- Scrub the entire area affected by the mold. Use a stiff brush or cleaning pad.
- Rinse with clean water.

Disinfect surfaces:

- Wear a filter mask and protective gloves when using disinfectants.
- After a good cleaning and rinsing, disinfect the area with household bleach. One ¼ cup bleach per gallon of water. Never mix bleach with ammonia, the fumes are toxic.
- Let disinfectant areas dry naturally overnight to kill the mold.

Environmental experts say exposure to mold could happen during cleanup. To minimize exposure consider using a breathing mask, rubber gloves and rest in a well ventilated area.

[Sue Royer, homeowner] Well I think the main thing is is to keep a positive attitude about it. Say I can do this and I will get through this. To me, this has been very hard because, you know, we have seen our home practically destroyed but yet at the same time there is always that hope of rebuilding. And I think that sometimes we think that the older we get that we can't rebuild, but I think that that is just a challenge for us.

[Stefany Strong, Health Reporter] If you decide to hire a company or contractor for the cleanup or restoration of your home, it is recommended that they have been properly trained in mold remediation. For more information about indoor air quality and mold growth, contact the Volusia County Health Department at (386) 822-6250 or the Florida Department of Health's Indoor Air Toxic Hotline at (800) 543-8279 or log onto www.volusiahealth.com/eh/iaq.html. For Volusia Magazine, I'm Stefany Strong, Public Information Officer for the Volusia County Health Department.