MOLD CLEAN-UP

Authors: Samantha Kennedy, UF/IFAS Extension Wakulla County | Katherine Allen, UF/IFAS Extension Suwannee County

UF | IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

WAKULLA COUNTY

SUWANNEE COUNTY

Mold is common in many Florida homes. If you spot mold in your home, it's a good idea to clean the area promptly and take steps to prevent it in the future.

If your home has been flooded or experienced water damage, such as after a storm or hurricane, chances are mold and mildew are not far behind.

How do I know if I have mold?

Moldy areas often smell musty. Mold usually looks like different-colored spots or splotches on surfaces that have been exposed to moisture.

Is mold a health concern?

That depends on the type of mold and how it affects those in your household. However, the CDC does not recommend mold testing, because no matter what kind of mold you have, the best thing to do is remove it and prevent it from coming back.

Does bleach expire?

Yes. Bleach degrades after a while and becomes less effective. Check the expiration date on the container before using. Diluted household laundry bleach is usually only effective for about 24 hours after the solution is made.

What should I wear when I'm cleaning up mold?

When cleaning more severe mold problems, wear protective gloves, goggles, long sleeves and pants, and an N95 mask.

For mild mold cases, the use of an N95 mask is not necessary, though gloves and goggles are still recommended.

What should I do if mold keeps coming back?

If mold comes back after removing it, determine the source of moisture, which may be a leaky roof or pipe. Also limit the moisture in the area by increasing ventilation and airflow and cleaning more frequently.

What should I use to clean up mold?

It's important to remove the mold, not just kill it. For mild cases, you may not have to use bleach. Instead, use an all-purpose cleaner or soapy water to wipe or scrub away mold.

To kill mold, use cleaning products containing bleach or create your own bleach solution by mixing no more than 1 cup of household laundry bleach with 1 gallon of water. Let stand for 15 minutes and wipe away with a clean cloth.

Do I need to throw away moldy items?

After a catastrophic event such as a hurricane or flood, many moldy items may not be salvageable. Do a thorough inspection of each mold-damaged item to assess whether it is safe to salvage.

For more detailed information, consult online resources from the CDC (**https://www.cdc.gov/mold/**) and EPA (**https://www.epa.gov/mold**).

An Equal Opportunity Institution.

September 2020