



# MIDDLESEX COUNTY OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## FACT SHEET

### Protect Yourself from Mold

After natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods, excess moisture and standing water contribute to the growth of **mold** in homes and other buildings. When returning to a home that has been flooded, be aware that mold may be present and may be a health risk for your family.

#### Recognizing Mold

You *may* recognize mold by:

- **Sight** (Are the walls and ceiling discolored, or do they show signs of mold growth or water damage?)
- **Smell** (Do you smell a bad odor, such as a musty, earthy smell or a foul stench?)

**Note: Controlling moisture in your home is the most critical factor for preventing mold growth.**

#### People at Greatest Risk from Mold

- People with asthma, allergies, and other respiratory (breathing) conditions
- People with immune suppression (such as people with HIV infection, cancer patients taking chemotherapy, and people who have received an organ transplant)

#### Possible Health Effects of Mold Exposure

- Stuffy nose, irritated eyes, wheezing, or skin irritation can occur in people who are sensitive to mold.
- People allergic to mold may have difficulty in breathing and shortness of breath.
- People with weakened immune systems and with chronic lung diseases, such as obstructive lung disease, may develop mold infections in their lungs.

If you or your family members have health problems after exposure to mold, contact your doctor or other health care provider.

Source of information: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Website: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/mold/protect.asp> August 25, 2006

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