

## PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET

No. 101.9

### *HOUSEHOLD CLEAN UP AFTER THE FLOOD*

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#### **AFTER THE WATERS HAVE RECEDED FROM YOUR HOME, WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?**

- Wear suitable protective clothing, including boots and gloves while cleaning up.
- Wash mud, dirt and debris from your house with a hose, starting at the highest point and working down to ground level.
- Where possible, remove all wet items such as floor coverings, rugs, mats, furniture, bedding, linen and clothing. If floor coverings are removed, thoroughly clean and dry the floor underneath before new material is laid.
- Be alert to snakes, spiders and rats that have taken refuge in your home.
- Begin drying out the house as soon as floodwaters recede.
  - Open doors and windows during dry days,
  - Fans may help,
  - Attempt to drain water away from under the house to increase airflow,
  - Check for trapped water and mud in wall or floor cavities.
- Each area affected by floodwater within the house need to be cleaned, including empty refrigerators and cupboards.
- Hand surfaced floors, walls, benches and sinks should be thoroughly cleaned with hot soapy water and disinfected by wiping or spraying surfaces with chlorine bleach solution (see below) or a product labelled as a disinfectant. Once disinfected allow to dry.
- To make up a 10 litre bucket (standard size) of disinfectant, put gloves on and add water to one of the following:
  - 25 – 50ml (1/4 cup) of household bleach OR
  - 8 – 16ml (dessert spoon) of liquid pool chlorine OR
  - 1.5 – 3g (teaspoon) of granular pool chlorine.
- Always wear gloves and protective clothing and do not touch face and eyes while using disinfectants.
- Mould or mildew may develop if items are not completely dried. Mould or mildew may be removed with household bleach, however the strength of the product may ruin some household items. Wear a mask when working with heavy mould.
- Linen, blankets and clothing should be washed in hot water (if instructions allow) or dry-cleaned.
- Flood affected mattresses are difficult to treat and may need to be discarded.
- Foam rubber mattresses may be thoroughly washed with a garden hose. A detergent solution should then be squeezed through the mattress before allowing it to dry. Other types of mattresses or furniture, such as lounge chairs, may be air dried in the sun then sprayed thoroughly with a disinfectant solution. Consult a local furniture renovating company if you are unsure about their condition.