

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**DHHR Warns Residents of Possible Mold Exposure during Clean Up**

**CHARLESTON, W.Va.** – The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health is encouraging residents in areas impacted by flooding to be aware of the effects of exposure to mold during the clean up process.

“After flooding, water can cause the growth of mold in homes and buildings,” said Dr. Rahul Gupta, State Health Officer and Commissioner of the Bureau for Public Health. “When entering a home that has been flooded, be aware that mold may be present and can pose a health risk for you and your family. If you have a chronic lung condition like asthma or a weakened immune system, you could develop mold infections in your lungs, and you should try to avoid buildings contaminated with mold.”

Signs of indoor mold growth include staining on surfaces, a musty odor, dark spots on or around vents, water stains and peeling or curling of vinyl floors or wallpaper.

Common reactions to mold are cough, congestion, runny nose, burning eyes, headaches, sneezing and sore throat. Children, pregnant women, older people and people with weakened immune systems may be more sensitive to mold than others.

“If you plan to be inside the building for a while or you plan to clean up mold, you should take appropriate preventive measures to protect your health while in the building,” said Gupta. “If you or your family members have health problems after exposure to mold, contact your doctor or other health care provider.”

Residents should be aware that due to the contaminated flood waters, professional help may be needed to rid the home of mold. Professional help is also needed if the home's heating/venting/air conditioning system has been flooded, to remove any debris or mold growing inside of it.

More information on cleaning up safely after a disaster is available at <https://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/cleanup/facts.asp>.

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