



SURVIVING THE STORM: THE DISASTER DEFENSE DIGEST

Monthly Safety Message:

General Seasonal Home Safety

- Test all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Replace air filters in your HVAC system.
- Clean out dryer vents to prevent fire hazards.
- Check fire extinguishers for expiration and proper pressure.
- Keep emergency kits stocked with fresh water, food, meds, flashlights, and batteries.
- Create or review your family emergency evacuation plan.
- Clear leaves and debris from gutters and downspouts.
- Ensure all outdoor lighting is functional for shorter daylight hours.
- Check weatherstripping on doors and windows to prevent drafts and allergens.
- Inspect insulation in attics and crawlspaces.



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The Silent Invader: Why Damp Days Demand Vigilance

As the rainy season arrives, most of us lean into the comforts of home, enjoying warm drinks and cozy evenings indoors. Yet moisture-heavy weather also creates the perfect conditions for an unwelcome guest. Mold is a silent invader, thriving out of sight until it begins to affect both your health and the structure of your home. Keeping your house mold free, especially during wetter months, is not only a matter of cleanliness but an essential part of maintaining a safe and healthy living space.

Mold grows quickly when warmth and dampness meet. Leaky roofs, slow plumbing drips, or condensation on windows can all serve as breeding grounds. Once spores take hold, they spread rapidly through walls, ceilings, or flooring. What starts as a faint musty odor or small dark patch can soon turn into widespread damage.

The health risks are real. Mold is known to trigger allergies, asthma, and respiratory issues even in people without chronic conditions. Children, older adults, and those with weakened immune systems are especially vulnerable. Symptoms often include coughing, headaches, fatigue, and skin irritation.

Many families only discover the root cause of their discomfort after realizing mold has been quietly growing inside their home.

Mold also weakens the very structure that keeps your family safe. Wood can rot, drywall can crumble, and insulation can lose effectiveness. Left unchecked, the cost of repairing mold damage climbs steeply, often far outweighing what it would have cost to prevent the problem.

Prevention begins with awareness. During rainy months, monitor bathrooms, kitchens, laundry rooms, basements, and around windows. Watch for damp spots, stains, or persistent odors. Address leaks right away and dry out wet materials quickly, since mold can begin to grow in as little as twenty-four hours. Ventilation is another key step; open windows on dry days, run exhaust fans, and consider using a dehumidifier in areas prone to moisture buildup.

Staying mold free is not about perfection but vigilance. Making seasonal mold checks part of your household routine helps protect your health, your budget, and your peace of mind. A little extra attention during the wet months can save you from major repairs and ensure that your home remains a safe and comfortable refuge.

Quick Tip:

Health & Hygiene Reminders

- Wash hands frequently and sanitize high-touch surfaces.
- Keep a supply of masks, especially during flu season.
- Rotate and clean humidifiers to prevent mold growth.
- Schedule routine pest inspections to prevent allergies.
- Maintain a clean fridge and pantry to avoid foodborne illness.
- Use natural cleaning products to reduce chemical exposure.
- Label and dispose of expired medication properly.
- Open windows regularly to ventilate indoor air.
- Monitor and reduce indoor humidity to prevent mold.
- Keep first aid kits updated and accessible in key rooms.
- Wipe down doorknobs, light switches, and remote controls weekly.
- Store toothbrushes separately and replace them every 3–4 months.

Wellness Wins: Building Strength Through the Chill of the Season

As the cooler months approach, many of us begin to brace ourselves for the annual arrival of cold and flu season. While it may feel unavoidable, there are many practical ways to strengthen your health and reduce your chances of falling ill. Taking care of yourself during this season is not only about avoiding germs, but also about building resilience through consistent healthy habits.

One of the most powerful tools you have is your immune system. Supporting it begins with the basics: proper rest, balanced nutrition, and regular physical activity. Sleep is often overlooked, yet it plays a vital role in recovery and immunity. Adults should aim for seven to nine hours each night, creating a routine that allows your body to fully recharge. A healthy diet also provides critical support. Foods rich in vitamins C and D, zinc, and antioxidants help protect against seasonal illnesses. Think fresh citrus fruits, leafy greens, whole grains, and lean proteins that fuel both energy and immune defense.

Hydration is another simple but powerful measure. During the colder months, people often forget to drink enough water. Staying hydrated supports digestion, circulation, and the ability to fight off infections. Warm teas with honey, broth-based soups, and water-rich fruits like oranges can keep fluids balanced while also providing comfort.

Preventive habits are equally important. Frequent hand washing with soap and water is one of the most effective ways to stop the spread of germs. Carrying



hand sanitizer for when soap is not available offers added protection. Being mindful of touching your face, especially your eyes, nose, and mouth, reduces the chances of germs entering your system.

Exercise provides both physical and mental benefits during this season. It boosts circulation, helps regulate stress, and improves overall mood. Even light activities like walking or stretching can help the body stay strong. Stress management is also essential, as stress can weaken immunity. Relaxation techniques such as meditation, breathing exercises, or spending time outdoors can keep stress in check.

Finally, do not overlook preventive healthcare. Staying up to date on recommended vaccines, including flu shots, can lessen the severity of illness or prevent it altogether. Listening to your body is just as important. If you begin to feel run down, rest and allow yourself time to recover before resuming your routine. Seeking medical advice when symptoms persist or worsen ensures that small concerns do not develop into larger health problems.

Cold and flu season does not have to mean weeks of sickness. By prioritizing rest, nutrition, hydration, hygiene, and preventive care, you give yourself the best chance to remain healthy and energetic. Small daily choices build resilience, and caring for yourself now sets the stage for a stronger season ahead. With consistency, these habits become part of a lifestyle that supports your well-being year round, not just during the colder

Fresh Start, Fresh Food: A Clean Kitchen Can Keep You Healthy



As the seasons shift, many of us think about swapping clothes in the closet, tidying the yard, or preparing the house for changing weather. One area that often gets overlooked is the kitchen, especially the fridge and pantry. Yet this is the very heart of the home, where health and comfort begin. Taking time to clear, clean, and refresh your food storage spaces is one of the simplest steps you can take to protect your household from foodborne illness while also creating a space that feels welcoming and stress free.

A clean fridge and pantry do more than just look good. Leftover spills, expired foods, or forgotten containers can become breeding grounds for bacteria and mold. These hidden risks can lead to unpleasant odors, cross contamination, and even illness if not addressed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that foodborne illness affects millions each year, and a cluttered fridge can easily add to that risk. A seasonal cleaning ritual allows you to check expiration dates, toss items that no longer serve you, and reorganize shelves so that wholesome foods are easy to see and reach. It also encourages mindful eating habits. When you know exactly what you have on hand, you are more likely to use it, reducing both food waste and unnecessary spending.

While deep cleaning might sound like a chore, it can actually be a satisfying ritual. The process itself offers a chance to slow down and take care of your environment. To make it healthier for both you and the planet, consider using natural cleaning products instead of chemical-based sprays

and wipes. Solutions made with vinegar, baking soda, lemon, or plant-based ingredients are not only effective at removing grime but also reduce your exposure to harsh toxins. They leave behind a fresh, natural scent without the lingering chemical smell that often clings to food storage areas.

Think of this seasonal refresh as an opportunity to reset your relationship with food. This process can reconnect you with traditions, spark creativity in the kitchen, and make meal preparation more joyful. Putting on music, lighting a candle, and approaching the task with a positive mindset can transform it from an obligation into an act of self-care.

Small details make a big difference. Clear containers for grains and beans, labeled jars for spices, and neatly stacked produce bins not only look pleasing but also save you time. When healthy ingredients are easy to find, you are more likely to reach for them instead of grabbing something processed or ordering takeout. A clean, organized kitchen inspires healthier choices, which ripple into your overall well-being.

As the season changes outside, let your kitchen mirror that sense of renewal. By maintaining a clean fridge and pantry with natural products, you protect your family from illness, reduce waste, and bring a touch of joy into everyday routines. The reward is not just a spotless fridge but a fresh beginning, one that nurtures both body and spirit through every changing season.

FREE CERTS...!

Get Them While You Still Can!

FEMA offers a range of free certifications through the Emergency Management Institute's Independent Study (IS) website. These certifications cover various aspects of emergency management, disaster response, and preparedness, providing valuable training and credentials to individuals involved in emergency services, community planning, and public safety. From courses on incident command systems and disaster response operations to specialized training in areas like hazardous materials management and crisis communications, FEMA's IS certifications offer comprehensive learning opportunities accessible to anyone with internet access. Whether you're a seasoned emergency responder or a concerned citizen looking to enhance your knowledge and skills, these certifications equip you with the tools and expertise needed to effectively respond to emergencies and contribute to resilient communities. Take advantage of FEMA's free certifications through the IS website to strengthen your preparedness and make a difference in emergency management efforts.

Register for your FEMA Student Identification (SID) at the following address:

<https://cdp.dhs.gov/femasid/register>

Take a look at the courses they offer:

<https://training.fema.gov/is/rslist.aspx?lang=en>