

# We Survived the Storm. Can We Survive the Mold?

Jennie Gorden

To be healthy, the people of New Orleans need clean water, clean air, and clean homes. Since Hurricane Katrina, we have had to deal with a lot of contaminants in our environment. One of the worst is mold. The mold built up in our homes after Katrina flooded our neighborhoods.

Hurricane Katrina is the disaster that keeps bringing more disaster. Even if we survived the storm, many of us are getting sick from the effects of the storm. Many homes were never gutted after the storm. The government did not show much interest in New Orleans. Mold still grows in the walls. Mold is bad for our young and old. It causes respiratory problems. I heard of a family that got sick because their home was full of mold.



The people of New Orleans are trying to clean and rebuild our neighborhoods. The students in my program, Literacy\*AmeriCorps, helped clear away weeds from a home in Lakeview. Weeds, like mold, have been a big problem in the flooded areas. We are also getting help from many outside organizations that have come to the city to help. But some homes have never been gutted or cleaned. The mold continues to grow.

*Jennie Gorden is a student at the St. Vincent de Paul Adult Learning Center in New Orleans. She survived Hurricane Katrina by walking to the interstate to get to dry land. Read more about her experience in The Change Agent, # 27, Sept. 2008, p. 15. For more on the health effects of Katrina, read "Katrina Fatigue" by Adrian McGrath at <[www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras)>.*

## Learn More About Indoor Air Pollution

**Draw a line between the pollutant (left column) and the reason it can be a problem.**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Cigarette smoke ]   | [ Can cause sudden illness and death.   |
| Carbon monoxide ]   | [ Can cause children to develop anemia, stomach problems, and brain damage.   |
| Mold ]  | [ Triggers allergies and can weaken the immune system.                        |
| Household products such as detergents, paints, oven and drain cleaners, and pesticides. ] | [ Contain chemicals that can hurt you if you swallow, inhale, or absorb them. |
| Lead ]  | [ Can cause respiratory problems and cancer.                                  |

**Discuss your experiences dealing with these pollutants. Join with others to make sure everyone has access to a home that is dry, pest-free, comfortable, and affordable. Visit the Alliance for Healthy Homes <[www.afhh.org](http://www.afhh.org)>.**

Source: <[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/indoorairpollution.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/indoorairpollution.html)>