

Kia mataara: Be careful around dust from floodwater silt, mud and soil

Dust from silt, mud and soil can damage your health if you don't take it seriously. One of the main concerns is little bits of silt, mud and soil in the air getting into your lungs and airways. This can damage your lungs. Coughing, lots of mucus and shortness of breath are all signs to watch out for.

Reduce your exposure at times when there is a lot of dust including:

- If possible, stay indoors when there's lots of dust, close windows and if you have air conditioning, make sure it is recirculating indoor air and not bringing air in from outside.
- Don't exercise outdoors when it is dusty.
- Make sure the places you sleep, eat and relax are dust free.
- Wear the right gear when you are cleaning up and there's lots of dust. What you should be wearing to stay safe is covered in our "Cleaning up Safely after a flood" fact sheet.

If you can't avoid dust:

- Wear a mask! Properly fitting masks are the best protection, like P2 and N95 masks. However, even surgical masks will still help.
- Children should only wear masks if they are older than 2. If they're younger do your best to keep them away from dust.
- Make sure masks fit correctly. Straps should go above and below the ears.
- Replace masks when needed so they keep working properly.
- Try to reduce vehicle numbers and speeds on roads with lots of silt. Getting speed from 30Km/h down to 15Km/h will cut dust down by about half.

If you can't get rid of silt straight away, then try to:

- Keep the surface wet.
- Cover the silt to prevent it drying and blowing around.
- Use barriers to protect the silt from the wind.



If you are worried about what dust is doing to your health, call **Healthline 0800 611 116**.