

Be careful around dust from floodwater silt, mud, and soil

**TN**: There are two logos at the top of the page. On the left is: Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa New Zealand Government. On the right is: Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand.

**Adapted in 2023 by Accessible Formats Service, Blind Low Vision NZ, Auckland.**

# Be careful around dust from floodwater silt, mud, and soil

Dust from silt, mud and soil can damage your health. Dust, mud, and soil in the air can get into your lungs and airways. This can damage your lungs.

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

* Stay indoors, 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.
* Make sure the places you sleep, eat, and relax are dust free.
* Wear the right gear when you are cleaning up (i.e. masks, rubber gloves, boots, and eye protection). See more information in our "Returning home 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. Slowing 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.**

**End of Be careful around dust from floodwater silt, mud, and soil**