

RESOURCES

BOOKS:

A Brief Guide to Mold Moisture and Your Home, US Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Air and Radiation, Indoor Environments Division, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC 20460
Publication number EPA 402-K-02-003
(Available on the web at www.epa.gov/iaq)

Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings, US Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Air and Radiation, Indoor Environments Division, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC 20460
Publication number EPA 402-K-01-001
(Available on the web at www.epa.gov/iaq)

“Guidelines on Assessment and Remediation of Fungi in Indoor Environments”
New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
Bureau of Environmental & Occupational Disease Epidemiology
(Available on the web at www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/epi/moldrpt1.html)

LABORATORIES: (consultants and testing)

Indoor Air Professionals
2630 North America Drive
Buffalo, NY 14224
800-683-0021
<http://www.indoorairpro.com>

Microbac
1962 Wager Road
Erie, Pa 16509
800-836-3881

Hometest by METS Laboratories
179 Smallwood Village Ctr.
Waldorf, MD 20602
800-604-1995
<http://www.hometest.com>

Integrated Microbiological Services (IMS Laboratory)
3250 Old Farm Lane, Suite 1
Walled Lake, MI 48390
877-665-3373
<http://www.homemoldtestkit.com/order.html>

QuantEM Laboratories
2033 Heritage Park Drive
Oklahoma City, OK 73120
405-755-7272
<http://www.quantem.com/index2.htm>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MOLD

WHAT ARE MOLDS?

Molds are virtually everywhere, indoors and outdoors. They are a microscopic organism that thrive on organic materials such as: cotton, wood, paper, leather, leaves and dirt to name just a few. Mold growth on surfaces can cause discoloration that tends to be green, gray, brown or black. Molds release tiny lightweight spores, which travel through the air and can grow in your home in the right conditions.

WHAT DOES MOLD NEED TO GROW?

Molds grow best in warm temperatures between 77 to 86 degrees Fahrenheit. They require moisture and a food source, such as those mentioned above.

CAN MOLDS BE GROWING IN MY HOME?

If you have excess moisture in your home, the answer to this question is YES. Generally, molds will grow anywhere there is moisture, high humidity, or condensation.

WHERE IN MY HOME AM I MOST LIKELY TO FIND MOLDS?

- ◆ Near plumbing leaks
- ◆ Damp basements and crawl spaces
- ◆ Bathrooms around shower areas, toilet and sink
- ◆ In the kitchen, where steam is generated during cooking

- ◆ After a flood
- ◆ Leaky roofs
- ◆ Sprinkler spray hitting the house
- ◆ Humidifiers
- ◆ Wet clothes drying indoors
- ◆ Laundry room where clothes dryers not properly vented to the outside of the home
- ◆ Refrigerator drip trays

WHAT SIGNS SHOULD I LOOK FOR IF MOLD IS GROWING IN MY HOME?

- ◆ Warped floor and floorboards
- ◆ Discoloration of the walls and ceilings
- ◆ Condensation on the window and walls
- ◆ Musty odors throughout the home
- ◆ Discoloration of furniture

SHOULD I BE CONCERNED WITH MOLD GROWTH IN MY HOME?

Most types of mold encountered by healthy individuals are not hazardous to their health. Molds can pose a problem when they are in high concentration or individuals are sensitive to the spores generated during the reproductive phase of the mold lifecycle. Molds have the potential to cause health problems. Indoor mold growth is unsanitary and undesirable. If you can see or smell mold inside your home you should take steps to remove the mold and eliminate excess moisture. Not only can molds cause health problems,

if the mold colonies are left untreated they can cause serious structural damage to your home.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SYMPTOMS OF MOLD INDUCED HEALTH PROBLEMS?

Inhaling, touching or ingesting molds can cause health problems in allergy sensitive individuals. Most commonly someone will experience either an immediate or delayed allergic reaction. Molds can irritate the skin, nose, eyes, and lungs. Some of the symptoms may include but are not limited to the following:

- ◆ Wheezing, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath
- ◆ Nasal and sinus congestion
- ◆ Dry hacking cough
- ◆ Eye irritation
- ◆ Nose and throat irritation
- ◆ Skin rashes or irritation

WHO IS AT GREATEST RISK TO MOLD EXPOSURE?

- ◆ Individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions (allergies, asthma)
- ◆ Individuals with weakened immune systems
- ◆ Young children, infants and the elderly

SHOULD I TEST MY HOME FOR MOLD?

In most cases if you can see or smell mold, testing or sampling is not necessary. Testing and sampling can be quite expensive and requires expertise. Another reason the health department does not suggest testing for mold

contamination is that there are few standards for judging what is an acceptable quantity of mold.

IF I FIND MOLD IN MY HOME HOW DO I REMOVE IT?

It is impossible to remove all mold and mold spores indoors, because molds are often mixed in the air. Remember the mold spores will not grow if there is not an adequate amount of moisture.

It is important to remember that molds, disinfectants and concentrated detergents can cause health problems; therefore, personal protection gear should be worn during the removal and cleanup process. It is important to wear a respirator to protect yourself from inhaling airborne spores. You will want to wear clothing that is easily cleanable or discarded. You should wear rubber gloves to protect yourself when using bleach or other potent disinfectants. Be sure that your home and the area being treated are well ventilated. Wearing goggles is a good idea as well. These will protect your eyes from mold spores, dust or other foreign objects.

Cleanup should begin after the source of moisture has been corrected and excess water has been eliminated. All damaged porous materials should be bagged and discarded (i.e., ceiling tiles, sheetrock, wood products, carpeting). The moldy area should be completely dry before disinfecting with a bleach solution or other commercial disinfectant.

Solid, less porous items (i.e., cabinets, furniture, solid wood

floors), which have received minimal damage, may be cleaned with a detergent. When cleaning concrete or block walls, a stiff industrial type brush should be used for cleaning.

HINTS

A wet/dry vacuum is a helpful piece of equipment for removing water and cleaning items.

You may first want to try a good commercial detergent. If that appears to be unsuccessful, there are specific household cleansers for eliminating mold. Many of the household cleansers contain sodium hypo chlorite, (bleach). Be sure to read the label and follow the instructions before applying the cleanser to the area. Use caution when handling all cleansers for they may irritate or be harmful to lungs, skin, eyes, etc.

Before tackling a large cleanup project, you may want to refer to a more detailed publication or consult a professional. If you choose to use a professional, make sure the professional has mold cleanup experience.

HOW CAN I PREVENT MOLD FROM GROWING IN MY HOME?

- ◆ You may want to inspect your home regularly for indications of excess moisture or mold growth.
- ◆ Keep all areas dry and clean
- ◆ Keep roof gutters clean and in good repair
- ◆ Keep air conditioning drip pans clean
- ◆ Repair leaks and remove excess water
- ◆ Keep indoor humidity low by:

- Increase ventilation throughout the home
- Use air conditioners or dehumidifiers when necessary
- Run a bathroom fan or open a window when showering
- Vent appliances correctly, such as dryers, stoves, and heaters
- Increase air temperature

These few simple guidelines should help answer some of your questions about mold in your home. If you still have additional questions or need more information, you can call the Chautauqua County Health Department at 716-753-4481, or refer to the resource list in this brochure.

RESOURCES

WEBSITES:

<http://www.epa.gov>

<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/publications/allergens/mold.htm>

<http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/doh/html/epi/moldrpt1.html>

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/ei/eimold.html>

<http://www.cal-iaq.org/iaqsheet.htm>

<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/hous2/mf2141.pdf>

<http://www.homemoldtestkit.com/order.html>

<http://www.quantem.com/index2.htm>