

How can people decrease exposure?

Sensitive individuals should avoid areas that are likely to have mold, such as compost piles, cut grass, and wooded areas. Inside homes, mold growth can be slowed by keeping humidity levels below 60% and ventilating showers and cooking areas.

In situations where mold exposure is unavoidable, sensitive people should wear a tight-fitting face mask.

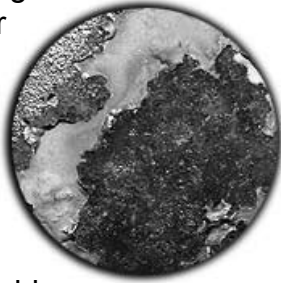
Basic Mold Cleanup

The key to mold control is moisture control. It is important to dry water damaged areas and items within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.

If mold is a problem in your home, clean up the mold and get rid of the excess water or moisture. Fix leaky plumbing or other sources of water.

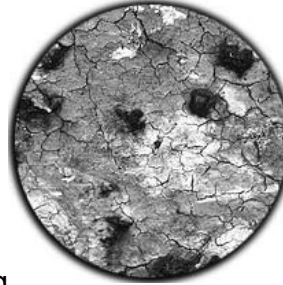
Wash mold off hard surfaces with detergent and water, and dry completely. Mold growth can be removed with commercial products or a weak bleach solution (1 cup of chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water).

Absorbent materials (such as ceiling tiles & carpet) that become moldy may need to be disposed of.



Specific Recommendations to Reduce Mold:

- Keep the humidity level in the house below 60%.
- Use an air conditioner or a dehumidifier during humid months.
- Be sure the home has adequate ventilation, including exhaust fans in kitchen and bathrooms.
- Add mold inhibitors to paints before application.
- Clean bathrooms with mold killing products.
- Do not carpet bathrooms and basements.
- Remove or replace previously soaked carpets and upholstery.



What areas have mold exposures?

- Antique shops • Greenhouses •
- Saunas • Summer cottages •
- Mills • Construction areas •
- Flower shops • Farms
- Damp basements with low light

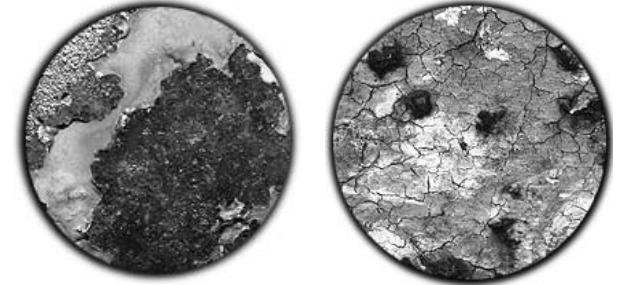


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Introduction to Molds

What are molds?

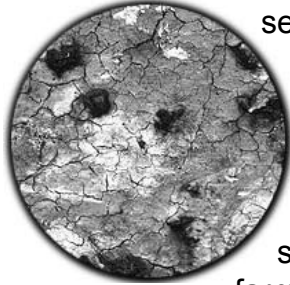
Molds are microscopic fungi that live on plant or animal matter. Most are filamentous organisms and the production of spores is characteristic of fungi in general. These spores can be air-, water-, or insect-borne.



Molds produce tiny spores to reproduce. Mold spores waft through the indoor and outdoor air continually. When mold spores land on a damp spot indoors, they may begin growing and digesting whatever they are growing on in order to survive. There are molds that can grow on wood, paper, carpet, and foods. When excessive moisture or water accumulates indoors, mold growth will often occur, particularly if the moisture problem remains undiscovered or un-addressed. There is no practical way to eliminate all mold and mold spores in the indoor environment; the way to control indoor mold growth is to control moisture.

How do molds affect people?

Some people are sensitive to molds. For these people, exposure to molds can cause symptoms such as nasal stuffiness, eye irritation, or wheezing. Some people, such as those with serious allergies to molds, may have more severe reactions.



Severe reactions may occur among workers exposed to large amounts of molds in occupational settings, such as

farmers working around moldy hay. Severe reactions may include fever and shortness of breath.

People with chronic illnesses, such as obstructive lung disease, may develop mold infections in their lungs.

Where are molds found?

Molds are found in virtually every environment and can be detected, both indoors and outdoors, year round. Mold growth is encouraged by warm and humid conditions.

Outdoors they can be found in shady, damp areas or places where leaves or other vegetation is decomposing.

Indoors they can be found where humidity levels are high, such as basements or showers.

Ten Things You Should Know About Mold

1. Potential health effects and symptoms associated with mold exposures include allergic reactions, asthma, and other respiratory complaints.
2. There is no practical way to eliminate all mold and mold spores in the indoor environment; the way to control indoor mold growth is to control moisture.
3. If mold is a problem in your home or school, you must clean up the mold and eliminate sources of moisture.
4. Fix the source of the water problem or leak to prevent mold growth.
5. Reduce indoor humidity (to 30-60%) to decrease mold growth by: venting bathrooms, dryers, and other moisture-generating sources to the outside; using air conditioners and de-humidifiers; increasing ventilation; and using exhaust fans whenever cooking, dishwashing, and cleaning.
6. Clean and dry any damp or wet building materials and furnishings within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.
7. Clean mold off hard surfaces with water and detergent, and dry completely. Absorbent materials such as ceiling tiles, that are moldy, may need to be replaced.
8. Prevent condensation: Reduce the potential for condensation on cold surfaces (i.e., windows, piping, exterior walls, roof, or floors) by adding insulation.
9. In areas where there is a perpetual moisture problem, do not install carpeting (i.e., by drinking fountains, by classroom sinks, or on concrete floors with leaks or frequent condensation).
10. Molds can be found almost anywhere; they can grow on virtually any substance, providing moisture is present. There are molds that can grow on wood, paper, carpet, and foods.



Note: Indoor molds are not a regulated contaminant.