



Mold Control

Mold occurs naturally and is an important part of the outdoor environment. It helps break down and digest organic material such as dead leaves.

Indoors, mold can become a problem if there are wet or damp areas where mold can grow.

Mold can cause health effects such as allergic reactions, asthma, and other respiratory problems. Pregnant women, young children, and individuals with asthma, allergies or other conditions affecting the respiratory or immune system may be especially vulnerable to mold exposure.

The KEY to controlling and fighting mold growth is MOISTURE control.

A few helpful hints:

- Inspect your home for existing mold growth.



Look for mold in wet or damp places and in places that smell moldy or musty. Laundry rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, and basements are rooms that often have moisture problems. Other places where mold can grow include the backside of drywall, wallpaper, and paneling; the top side of ceiling tiles; and the underside of carpets and pads. Remember that mold comes in many colors, not just black.

- Try to wipe up spills as soon as they happen.



- Keep wet or damp clothing out of the clothes hamper and hang wet towels to dry.

- Fix sources of moisture such as leaky plumbing, roofs, leaky window frames, and cracks in basement floors and walls as soon as possible.

- Keep humidity low (between 30% - 50%) with a de-humidifier or an Energy Star air conditioner.



- Prevent condensation on cold surfaces:

Cover cold water drainpipes; use sealant around windows to make sure that it is completely air tight; insulate ceilings, walls, and floors.



- In areas where there is continual moisture (by sinks, concrete floors with leaks) do not install carpet.



- Increase air movement, especially when showering, cooking, or using the dishwasher, by opening doors or windows, or using fans.
- Other sources of moisture include planters and drip pans in air conditioners and refrigerators.



What should you do if you find mold?

- Avoid exposing yourself or others.
- If there has been a lot of water damage or if mold growth covers a large area (anything over 10 square feet), contact the health department for additional information, or consider hiring a professional for remediation. If you hire a home inspector, building inspector, or other professional to locate or fix a water or mold problem, make sure the professional has experience. Check references and look for membership in professional organizations.
- For smaller jobs that you feel you can clean yourself, always protect yourself by wearing gloves, goggles, and an N-95 respirator, which can be bought at most hardware stores. If you have any health concerns, please consult a health professional before starting cleanup. People with breathing or immune problems are especially vulnerable to possible health effects.



- Mold on hard surfaces (e.g. plastic, metal, tile) can usually be scrubbed away with water and detergent. After cleaning, make sure you dry the surface completely.
- Mold on carpet, ceiling tiles, furniture, and other absorbent materials is extremely difficult to remove and usually these items need to be replaced.
- Never vacuum moldy carpets or upholstery – it does not work, and will disperse mold spores into the air.