

## MOLD FACTS

Molds reproduce by tiny particles called spores. The spores are light and travel on air currents. If they find a suitable surface, they begin to grow. Molds are simple, microscopic organisms whose purpose in the ecosystem is to break down dead

Most of the molds found indoors, actually came from outdoors. Some molds are useful in making antibiotics and cheese.



Some molds are highly toxic when ingested, as the types that invade grains and peanuts.



Molds can be found in most bathrooms and throughout the house. Molds can appear in many colors—white, orange, pink, blue, green, black or brown.

**CAUTION:** If you see moisture condensation on the windows or walls, it is also possible that you have a combustion problem in your home. It is important to have sufficient fresh air available for fuel burning appliances, such as clothes dryer, furnace, water heater, stove/range, as well as a fireplace. A shortage of air for these appliances can result in a *back drafting of dangerous gases such as carbon monoxide* into the home. To prevent back drafting, you need to either open vents or a ventilation systems that brings fresh air into the home to replace air that is exhausted out. Have your local utility company or a professional heating contractor inspect your fuel-burning appliances annually.

### Additional References

#### Web Sites:

Rhode Island Department of Health  
<http://www.health.ri.gov/environment/risk/indoor/htm>  
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
[http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/asthmas\\_old/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/asthmas_old/default.htm)  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
<http://www.epa.gov/iaq>

#### Books:

Indoor *Biological Pollutants*. 1992. Washington, D.C.;  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Burge, Harriet A.  
1995. *Bioaerosols*. Boca Raton, Fla.: Lewis Publishers

Monterey County Health Dept.  
Environmental Health Bureau  
1200 Aguajito Rd, Rm 103  
Monterey, CA 93940  
(831) 647-7654  
Fax (831) 647-7925



# MOLD



# FAQ'S

DETECTION

TESTING

REACTIONS

PREVENTION

## What does mold need to grow?

Mold needs:

- a food source such as leaves, paper, wood or dirt
- a source of moisture
- a place to grow

## What are sources of moisture in my home?

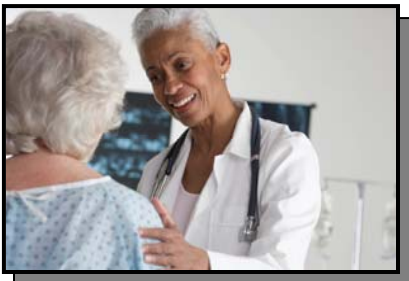
Many sources can cause moisture in your home, including:

- Flooding
- leaky roofs
- Humidifiers
- damp basement or crawl spaces
- constant plumbing leaks
- clothes dryers vented indoors

## Should I be Concerned about mold in my home?

Exposure to any mold could cause health effects under the right conditions (e.g., allergic symptoms such as watery eyes, running nose, itching, coughing, wheezing, difficulty breathing, sneezing, nasal congestion, headache and fatigue). The same amount of mold may cause health problems for one person, but not another, because some people are more sensitive to molds than others. Those most often sensitive are:

- Infants and children
- The elderly
- Immune compromised patients (i.e., people with HIV infection, cancer, liver disease, etc., or who are undergoing chemotherapy)
- Individuals with existing respiratory conditions, such as allergies and asthma.



## Cleaning Up Mold

- Mix a household cleaner *without ammonia with hot water and scrub affected areas.*
- Wear gloves when handling moldy materials. Use a stiff brush or cleaning pad on block walls or uneven surfaces.
- Rinse clean with water.
- Disinfect the area with a solution of water and bleach (1/2 cup bleach per gallon of water). Straight bleach will **not** be more effective. When mixing or using solution, make sure the windows are open. **NEVER MIX BLEACH WITH AMMONIA; THE FUMES ARE TOXIC.**
- Allow the disinfecting areas to dry naturally for 2-3 days. This extended time is important to kill all the mold.



## Reduce exposure while cleaning up

- Shut off heat or air conditioning to prevent mold spores from being spread around the home.
- Anyone with a chronic illness, such as asthma or emphysema, should not do the cleanup.
- Wear protective clothing that is easily cleaned or disposable.
- Work over short periods, take breaks often and in a fresh air location.
- Use a HEPA filter mask to reduce the mold spores you inhale.
- Do not allow bystanders to be present while you are doing the cleanup.
- Open windows in your house during and after the cleanup.

Stachybotrys is a greenish-black, slimy mold found only on cellulose products (such as wood or paper) that have remained wet for several days or more. Stachybotrys does not grow on tile, concrete or linoleum. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), all molds should be treated the same with respect to potential health risks and removal. All molds should be handled with caution.



Mold can also cause structural damage to your home. Testing for molds is very difficult and expensive and homeowners must hire a contractor to test their homes. Mold is normally found outdoors and counts fluctuate from day to day depending on the season. Testing can not determine whether health problems will occur. Even if testing is done, no standards exist for mold testing to judge what is acceptable amounts of mold. Due to the uncertainties associated with testing of molds, it is not recommended in most cases. If you can see or smell mold, testing is usually not necessary. It needs to be cleaned up.