



BASIC FACT SHEET ON MOLD

WHAT IS MOLD?

Mold is a living organism that likes to grow in places that are dark, damp, and have little to no air circulation. Mold can grow anywhere and it is unhealthy to live in a house with mold growth. Mold can be a variety of colors, but black, gray and green are common. Mold has a fuzzy appearance and may smell musty. Mold is also commonly referred to as "mildew".

WHERE IS MOLD FOUND?

Mold likes to grow in dark, damp places with poor air circulation such as the garage, kitchen, basement, bathroom, and anywhere else in the home where these conditions exist. Mold can even grow on wet clothing that is left damp for a long time.

WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE HEALTH EFFECTS OF MOLD?

Mold produces spores, which are tiny pieces that become airborne and may be breathed in. These tiny invisible spores may cause health problems when inhaled. Mold can cause asthma attacks in people with allergies to mold, or people with asthma. Signs and symptoms of mold related allergies include watery eyes, sneezing, runny or stuffy nose, itching, headaches and difficulty breathing. Certain types of mold can be hazardous to humans, and cause extreme reactions in any person.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT MOLD GROWTH IN MY HOME?

The first step in treating mold in the home is to identify why the mold is growing. Is the air circulation poor? Is there a leak that is causing excess moisture to build up? Is the humidity in my home above 50%? After finding the sources and causes of the mold, try to take steps to fix these problems. Some steps may include keeping the exhaust fan on while showering or cooking, fixing leaks in pipes or roofs, and keeping indoor humidity below 50% by using dehumidifiers.

HOW CAN I CLEAN UP THE MOLD I HAVE NOW?

The best way to clean mold is to scrub it with a stiff bristle brush and use soap and water. A solution of chlorine bleach and water, one-cup bleach to ten cups of water, may also be used. **If using a bleach solution DO NOT use any other type of cleaner.** If bleach and ammonia are mixed together, the mixture will release a toxic gas that is very harmful to humans and pets. Cleaning mold may release more spores into the air. Be sure to keep mold-sensitive people away from the area while cleaning.

More information about mold is available from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) at **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** and from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov/health/mold.html.