



## **Mold Basics** Advice on restoring your home after finding mold.

### Things You Should Know About Mold

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.

Potential health effects and symptoms associated with mold exposures include allergic reactions, asthma, and other respiratory complaints.

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.

If mold is a problem in your home or business, you must clean up the mold and eliminate sources of moisture.

Fix the source of the water problem or leak to prevent mold growth.

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.

Clean and dry any damp or wet building materials and furnishings within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.

Prevent condensation: Reduce the potential for condensation on cold surfaces (i.e., windows, piping, exterior walls, roof, or floors) by adding insulation.

In areas where there is a perpetual moisture problem, do not install carpeting.

### How do I get rid of mold?

It is impossible to get rid of all mold and mold spores indoors; some mold spores will be found floating through the air and in house dust. The mold spores will not grow if moisture is not present. Indoor mold growth can and should be prevented or controlled by controlling moisture indoors. If there is mold growth in your home, you must clean up the mold and fix the water problem. If you clean up the mold, but don't fix the water problem, then, most likely, the mold problem will come back.

·Fix plumbing leaks and other water problems as soon as possible. Dry all items completely.

·Scrub mold off hard surfaces with detergent and water, and dry completely. Borax is a good choice, better than bleach.

·Absorbent or porous materials, such as ceiling tiles and carpet, may have to be thrown away if they become moldy.



·Do not paint or caulk moldy surfaces. Clean up the mold and dry the surfaces before painting. Paint applied over moldy surfaces is likely to peel.

·If you are unsure about how to clean an item, or if the item is expensive or of sentimental value, you may wish to consult a specialist.

**Avoid breathing in mold or mold spores.** In order to limit your exposure to airborne mold, you may want to wear an N-95 respirator, available at many hardware stores

**Wear gloves.** Long gloves that extend to the middle of the forearm are recommended. When working with water and a mild detergent, ordinary household rubber gloves may be used. If you are using a disinfectant, a biocide, or a strong cleaning solution, you should select gloves made from natural rubber, neoprene, nitrile, polyurethane, or PVC. Avoid touching mold or moldy items with your bare hands.

**Wear goggles.** Goggles that do not have ventilation holes are recommended. Avoid getting mold or mold spores in your eyes.

#### How Do I Know When the Remediation or Cleanup is Finished?

·You must have completely fixed the water or moisture problem before the cleanup or remediation can be considered finished.

·You should have completed mold removal. Visible mold and moldy odors should not be present. Please note that mold may cause staining and cosmetic damage.

·You should have revisited the site(s) shortly after cleanup and it should show no signs of water damage or mold growth.

·People should have been able to occupy or re-occupy the area without health complaints or physical symptoms.

·Ultimately, this is a judgment call; there is no easy answer. If you have concerns or questions call the EPA Indoor Air Quality Information Clearinghouse IAQ INFO at (800) 438-4318.

For more information on mold related issues including mold cleanup and moisture control/condensation/humidity issues, you can call the EPA Indoor Air Quality Information Clearinghouse at (800) 438-4318. Or visit: [www.epa.gov/mold](http://www.epa.gov/mold)