

Molds in the Environment

This information provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC)

What are molds?

Molds are fungi that can be found both indoors and outdoors. No one knows how many species of fungi exist but estimates range from tens of thousands to perhaps three hundred thousand or more. Molds grow best in warm, damp, and humid conditions, and spread and reproduce by making spores. Mold spores can survive environmental conditions, such as dry conditions, that do not support normal mold growth.

What are some of the common indoor molds?

1. Cladosporium
2. Penicillium
3. Alternaria
4. Aspergillus
5. Mucor

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.

How can people decrease mold 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 50% and ventilating showers and cooking areas. Mold growth can be removed with commercial products or a weak bleach solution (1 cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water). In situations where mold exposure is unavoidable, sensitive people should wear a tight-fitting face mask.

Specific Recommendations:

1. Keep the humidity level in the house below 50%.
2. Use an air conditioner or a dehumidifier during humid months.
3. Be sure the home has adequate ventilation, including exhaust fans in kitchen and bathrooms.
4. Add mold inhibitors to paints before application.
5. Clean bathrooms with mold killing products.
6. Do not carpet bathrooms and basements.
7. Remove or replace previously soaked carpets and upholstery.

What areas have high mold exposures?

- Antique shops
- Greenhouses
- Saunas
- Farms
- Mills
- Construction areas
- Flower shops
- Summer cottages

I found mold growing in my home, how do I test the mold?

Evidence indicates that allergies are the most common type of disease associated with molds. Susceptibility of individuals can vary greatly either because of the amount or type of mold.. If you are susceptible to mold and mold is seen or smelled, there is a potential health risk; therefore, no matter what type of mold is present, you should arrange for its removal.

Health Solutions comments:

Sometimes you can see mold and mildew growing in and around your home. In this case, you need to consider how to rid the house of such contaminants. If you are not sure, you may wish to consider testing your house for mold. You can purchase a test kit and do the test yourself following the easily understood instructions. Test kits do not cost a lot of money and provide results within 2-5 days.

Further, our stance is "We prefer to use natural cleaning agents rather than chemically based, man-made cleaning agents." Many people have or develop sensitivities to man-made chemicals. Continued use of such chemicals will, overtime, cause health related problems including allergies and other assorted health problems. For instance, Orange TKO has been shown to kill mildew, mold and fungus but is 100% natural, made from orange peels. It is non-toxic and biodegradable. Further, an air filtration unit such as Pionair Brand has also been shown to effectively lessen or eliminate airborne mold, mildew and fungus spores.