

Indoor MOLD

Quick Tip Information Sheet

Purpose

This is an information sheet to provide assistance to individuals who may not encounter mold on a regular basis and are unfamiliar in its recognition and remediation.

What is Mold?

Molds are forms of fungi (microscopic organisms) that are found naturally in the environment. Molds come in a variety of colors, including green, black, white, brown and orange. Molds can appear fuzzy or in slimy streaks. There is often a musty or earthy odor around its presence.

What Mold Needs to Exist

Molds can grow on virtually any substance, as long as moisture or water, oxygen, and an organic source (a food source) are present. Good food sources for indoor mold growth are carpet, cloth, wood, drywall and insulation. When excessive moisture or water accumulates indoors, mold growth often will occur, particularly if a moisture problem remains uncorrected.

Potential Health Effects of Mold Exposure

Most typical indoor air exposures to mold do not usually present a risk of adverse health effects, but exposure has the potential to cause allergic type reactions which may be immediate or delayed. These may include runny nose, scratchy throat, itchy eyes, sneezing, wheezing and coughing.

People at Greatest Risk of Health Effects

Individuals with a compromised immune system (e.g. HIV patients), allergies, asthma, sinusitis, or other lung diseases have the greatest risk of being affected.

Scenarios for Indoor Mold

Mold can grow within 24 to 48 hours in an area when there is a wet surface or material that is not properly dried or discarded promptly as a result of water discharged from a burst pipe or water intrusion from a leaking roof. Most indoor mold situations result from materials and surfaces wetted by a water intrusion event, such as flood, roof leak or other plumbing situations such as a broken/leaking pipe or pipe condensation resulting in mold growth on insulation.

Preventing Mold Growth

Remove excess moisture with a wet-dry vacuum and dry out the area as quickly as possible while ventilating the area by opening doors/window, using fans, or other air moving equipment etc. Clean wet materials and surfaces with detergent and water and discard all porous materials that have been wet for more than 48 hours.

General Mold Cleanup Tips

Identify and correct moisture problems immediately while ensuring that the cleanup area is well ventilated. Discard mold damaged materials in plastic bags. Clean non-porous wet items and surfaces with detergent and water and disinfect cleaned surfaces with 1 part bleach to 10 parts of water. Caution: Do not mix bleach with ammonia containing cleaning products. Use proper personal protective equipment for potential respiratory (N95 respirator is recommended), hand and face exposure.