Keep your family safe from. . .

mold & mildew in the HOME

What are mold and mildew?

Mold and mildew are simple fungi that can grow on many surfaces in a home. Though molds are always present in the air, those that cause mildew need a food source, moisture and specific temperature ranges to grow.

Mold and mildew commonly develop in humid summer weather, especially in closed houses. They grow fastest at temperatures between 75 °F and 85 °F.

Mold and mildew often grows in cellars, basements, crawl spaces and closets, on draperies and rugs in basement recreation rooms, on shower curtains, and on damp clothes that have been rolled up before ironing. Molds also develop in new houses because the building materials often have high moisture levels.

Why is mold a health problem?

Exposure to mold can cause health problems, most commonly allergic reactions from breathing mold spores.

Allergy and irritation are the most common symptoms of mold exposure, including:

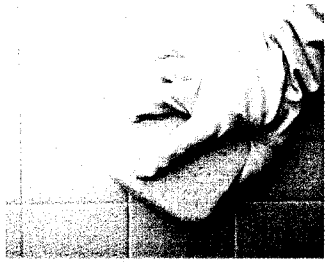
- Nasal and sinus congestion
- Eye irritation, such as itchy, red, watery eyes
- Respiratory problems, such as wheezing and difficulty breathing
- Coughing and throat irritation
- Skin irritation, such as rashes
- Headaches

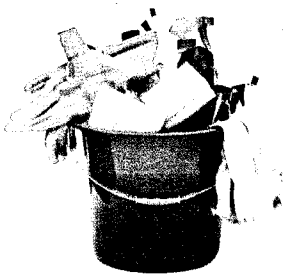
Action steps for creating a healthy home

Control the moisture problem that is allowing mold to grow in your home.

Discard porous materials such as drywall, carpeting, paper and ceiling tiles that have extensive mold growth on them.

Clean up mold growing on hard surfaces such as wood and concrete. Scrub small areas with a cleaning rag wetted with dilute detergent. Wear rubber gloves and a dust mask for jobs other than routine cleaning. For a large mold problem or if you're highly sensitive to mold, have an experienced professional do the work.





Monitor contaminated areas for new mold growth and signs of moisture. If either reappear, you may need to make more repairs or remove the affected material.

Learn More

To learn more about mold and mildew and how to keep your family safe from exposure to them, check out these resources:

- Online: http://www.cdc.gov/mold
- Mold and Mildew Hotline: 517-335-9436

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2009). *Molds*. Atlanta, GA: Author, Environmental Health. Retrieved March 12, 2009, from http://www.cdc.gov/mold/default.htm

Olson, W., & Pearce, M. (2006) *Molds – Your safe home* (WW-06944). St. Paul: University of Minnesota Extension. Retrieved March 12, 2009, from http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/housingandclothing/DK6944.html

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2002). *A brief guide to mold, moisture, and your home* (402-K-02-003). Washington, DC: Author, Office of Air and Radiation, Indoor Environments Division. Retrieved March 12, 2009, from http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldguide.html

To Do:
Learn more about mold & mildew & keeping safe from exposure.

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