

MOLD CONTROL TIPS

What is Mold?

Mold is found virtually everywhere in our environment; both indoors and outdoors and in both new and old structures. Molds are naturally occurring microscopic organisms that break down organic matter in the environment. Mold is capable of sustaining itself anywhere there is moisture and a good source such as wood, wallpaper, upholstery, dust, etc. Mold spores (like plant pollen) are spread through the air and are commonly transported by shoes, clothing and pets. According to the EPA, 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. Moisture control is the key to preventing mold.

Should I Have My Home Air Tested for Mold?

Not necessarily. According to the EPA's "A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home," "since no EPA or other federal limits have been set for mold or mold spores, sampling cannot be used to check a building's compliance with federal mold standards."

Information from Environmental Protection Agency:

<https://www.epa.gov/mold>

<https://www.epa.gov/mold/printable-version-brief-guide-mold-moisture-and-your-home>

Minimize the Potential for Mold Growth in Your Home By: Cleaning Your Home Regularly

Regular vacuuming, mopping and cleaning is important to remove the household dirt and debris that creates an environment supportive of mold growth. Use household cleaners on hard surfaces and flooring when possible. Immediately dispose of moldy food. When you see mold/mildew accumulating on household surfaces, immediately remove it using a mixture of soap and water. The EPA also recommends cleaning products such as Lysol Disinfectant, Clorox Cleanup or Tilex Mildew Remover as options. The EPA does not recommend the use of chlorine bleach for mold clean up. Ensure to dry all items completely after clean up.

Removing Visible Moisture Accumulation

Remove moisture on windows, walls, ceilings, floors, registers and other indoor surfaces as soon as reasonably possible. Pay particular attention to bathrooms, the kitchen and the laundry room where moisture commonly accumulates.

Inspecting Your Home

Check your home for damage to the roof and siding, as well as clogged gutters or standing water against the home after heavy rain or strong winds for sources of water intrusion.

Inspect washing machine hoses and discharge lines for signs of leaks or moisture accumulation.

Inspect your utility closet regularly and ensure it is free of dust and debris.

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Reporting Flooding, Leaks, and Signs of Water Damage Immediately

If you experience an appliance or plumbing overflow/signs of water leaking, take steps to stop the flooding and immediately notify the Maintenance Department. Even if you consider the issue minor, notify the maintenance team so they can inspect the area to ensure moisture is not trapped in the flooring or walls. Completely dry out or dispose of any personal items affected by the flooding. Report overflowing air conditioning drip pans or condensation lines.

Maintaining Your Air Conditioning & Heating System

Change the air filters in your home on a regular basis. The Maintenance Department provides air filter replacements free of charge. Contact 000-000-0000 for information on where to get filters for your home.

Promptly notify the Maintenance Department about any air conditioning or heating problems you encounter.

Heating and cooling temperature settings are dependent on your region and vary greatly. Therefore, to understand your temperature range, please contact your maintenance department.

Leave ceiling fans on low to keep air circulating throughout the home. This will control the amount of humidity inside the home and can prevent water intrusion in the form of burst pipes.

To ensure proper airflow, do not block returns or supply registers.

Following These Additional Tips

- Always turn on exhaust fans in the bathroom and kitchen before you start showering or cooking and keep the fan running for several minutes after you finish.
- When showering, keep the shower curtain inside the tub or fully close the shower door.
- After showering, wipe moisture off of shower walls, shower doors, bathtubs and bathroom floors. Leave the bathroom door open until all moisture on the mirror and bathroom walls has dissipated. Hang towels and bath mats so they will completely dry.
- When using a sprinkler to water your lawn, ensure the stream is not hitting your home.
- If there's some mold in the shower or elsewhere in the bathroom that seems to reappear, increasing ventilation and cleaning more frequently will usually prevent the mold from recurring, or at least keep the mold to a minimum.
- Limit houseplants to a reasonable number to limit excess humidity and limit molds that could grow on the soil surface. Avoid over-watering.
- Be cautious when installing humidifiers. Humidifiers create extra moisture in the air and can encourage the growth of mold.

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Is Mold Going to Affect My Family or My Health?

Not necessarily. Just because mold or mildew is present doesn't mean it will make you sick. According to the CDC, less than 500 of the 100,000 mold species have been described as human pathogens. Individual factors such as general health, age and preexisting conditions contribute to how susceptible a person is to mold as an allergen. Only your medical provider can determine if an allergy to a specific mold exists the same way they would determine if you are allergic to dogs, oak pollen or grass. If you feel you may have an allergy, visit your medical provider.

Additionally, there are many environmental causes other than mold that can act as respiratory irritants, including:

- Pet dander
- Household dust
- Scented candles
- Tobacco smoke
- Local pollen
- Household cleaning products
- Air fresheners

What to Do If You Suspect Mold

Complying with this information will help prevent mold and mildew growth in your home. Immediately notify the Maintenance Department at 000-000-0000 if you discover a leak, suspect water intrusion of any kind or discover mold in your home. Remember, your community can only address problems in your home that we are aware of. If you have questions regarding this information, please contact a Community Representative at 000.000.0000.

Resources

More information about mold is readily available at these reputable sites:

Centers for Disease Control, Environmental Health:
<http://www.cdc.gov/mold/>

Environmental Protection Agency:
<http://www.epa.gov/mold/>