

What is mold?

Molds reproduce from tiny spores. Mold spores waft through the indoor and outdoor air continually. When mold spores land on a damp spot indoors, they may begin growing and digesting whatever they are growing on in order to survive. There are molds that can grow on wood, paper, carpet, and foods. When excessive moisture or water accumulates indoors, mold growth will often occur, particularly if the moisture problem remains undiscovered or un-addressed. 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.



How do I get rid of mold?

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

REMEMBER:

- The key to mold control is moisture control.
- If mold is a problem in your home, you should clean up the mold promptly **and** fix the water problem.
- It is important to dry water-damaged areas and items within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.



Public Health
Sheboygan County
Division of Public Health

Mold and Moisture

What you need to know about mold and moisture control techniques



Sheboygan County Division of
Public Health

(920) 459-4382

public.health@sheboygancounty.com



TEN THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MOLD

1. Potential health effects and symptoms associated with mold include allergic reactions, asthma, and other respiratory complaints.
2. There is no practical way to eliminate all mold and mold spores indoors; the way to control mold growth is to control moisture.
3. If mold is a problem in your home you must clean up the mold and eliminate sources of moisture.
4. Fix the source of the water problem or leak to prevent mold growth.
5. Reduce indoor humidity (to 30-60%) by: venting bathrooms, dryers; using air conditioners and de-humidifiers; increasing ventilation; and using exhaust fans whenever cooking.
6. Clean and dry any damp or wet building materials and furnishings within 24-48 hours.
7. Clean mold off hard surfaces with water and detergent, and dry completely. Absorbent materials that are moldy, may need to be replaced.
8. Reduce the potential for condensation on cold surfaces (i.e., windows, piping, exterior walls, roof, or floors) by adding insulation.
9. In areas where there is a perpetual moisture problem, do not install carpeting.
10. Molds can be found almost anywhere; they can grow on virtually any surface, providing moisture is present.

Moisture Control

Water in your home can come from many sources. Water can enter your home by seeping through basement floors. Showers or even cooking can add moisture to the air. The amount of moisture that the air in your home can hold depends on the temperature of the air. As the temperature goes down, the air is able to hold less moisture. This is why, in cold weather, moisture condenses on cold surfaces (for example, drops of water form on the inside of a window). This moisture can allow mold growth.

There are many ways to control moisture in your home:

- Fix leaks and seepage. Water in the basement can result from the lack of gutters or a water flow toward the house. Water leaks in pipes or around tubs and sinks can provide a place for mold growth.
 - Use exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchens to remove moisture to the outside. Vent your clothes dryer to the outside.
 - Turn off certain appliances (such as humidifiers or kerosene heaters) if you notice moisture on windows and other surfaces.
- Use dehumidifiers and air conditioners, especially in hot, humid climates, to reduce moisture in the air.
 - Raise the temperature of cold surfaces where moisture condenses.
 - Use insulation or storm windows.
 - Open doors between rooms (especially doors to closets which may be colder than the rooms) to increase air circulation. Air circulation carries heat to the cold surfaces.
 - Increase air circulation by using fans and by moving furniture from wall corners to promote air and heat circulation.
 - Pay special attention to carpet on concrete floors. Carpet can absorb moisture and serve as a place for molds to grow. Use area rugs which can be taken up and washed often.

Source: EPA <http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldresources.html#Basics>