

How to Prevent mold Problems in your Home.

- ◆ The most important thing to do is to control moisture in your home.
- ◆ Keep the humidity in the house below 50%. Humidity levels above 60% can promote mold growth.
- ◆ Start early after a flood (at least within 24 hours) before much mold growth can occur.
- ◆ As soon as you can attend to any leaking pipes, flooded basements, roof leaks, ice dams, and other sources of water infiltration.
- ◆ When rebuilding make sure to use water resistant materials such as tiles, stone, or deep sealed concrete.
- ◆ Always ensure that the rain water from the gutters or roof drain away from the house.
- ◆ Keep all fabrics dry and store them in well ventilated areas.
- ◆ To reduce moisture inside the house especially in humid months use dehumidifiers or fans and keep windows open.
- ◆ Do not use fans if mold already exists to avoid spreading the mold.
- ◆ Avoid regular drying of clothing on indoor drying lines or racks.
- ◆ Insulate pipes and install chimney liners to prevent condensation.
- ◆ Regularly have your heating and cooling systems inspected and serviced.
- ◆ Add mold inhibitors to paint when repainting.
- ◆ Disinfect potential problem spots routinely using 10% bleach or commercial disinfectant.

CHEMICAL USE IN MOLD CONTROL

- ◆ In some isolated cases people may wish to use anti-microbial pesticides (biocides) to clean up mold.
- ◆ In such circumstances it is vital that all such chemicals be labeled for the intended use and handled according to directions given.
- ◆ Always remember that in many indoor mold situations, anti-microbial pesticides are not needed.
- ◆ Almost 100% of the time the mold can be controlled by fixing the moisture problem and properly cleaning the af-

SOME GENERAL CAUTIONS

- ◆ Never mix bleach with ammonia; fumes from the mixture are toxic.
- ◆ Always wear gloves and a mask. Molds usually release spores when disturbed.
- ◆ Exercise caution when discarding items contaminated with mold.
- ◆ Always ask others to leave the area when being cleaned.
- ◆ Work for short time spans and rest in fresh air location.
- ◆ If you are especially sensitive to mold or consider paying a licensed contractor to do the cleanup.

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Mold Remediation Guide for the General Public Following a Flood.



Guidelines from:

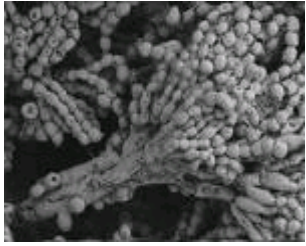
FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency.

ODH - Ohio Department of Health

CDC - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

What is Mold?

Almost always after a flood, excess moisture and standing water contributes to the growth of mold in homes. Molds are fungi that are found almost everywhere, inside and outdoors, year round. Molds act as nature's decomposers, breaking down organic matter, and can be various colors including white, orange, green, or black. Molds reproduce by releasing microscopic spores into the air, which can enter homes through windows, doors, cracks, and vents. When mold spores land on damp material they may thrive. The most important ingredient for mold growth is moisture. Controlling moisture sources in your home is the most important step you can take to ensure your home remains mold free.



Health effects of mold in the home.

Infants and children, the elderly, immune compromised individuals, and people with respiratory problems such as allergies and asthma are more susceptible to mold problems. However, sensitivity to mold varies from person to person.

Exposure to mold and mold spores can cause a range of allergic reactions including:

- ◆ Eye irritation (watery, burning, itchy, blurred vision), runny nose, sore throat, sneezing, nasal and sinus congestion.
- ◆ Coughing, wheezing, difficulty breathing, rhinitis.
- ◆ Asthmatic episodes, headaches, and fatigue.

It is advisable to seek medical attention if you or a member of your family has history of lung disease.

Steps to follow in mold clean up:

1. Identify and correct the moisture problem.
2. Remove, bag, and discard non-essential porous material that has been heavily contaminated (i.e., ceiling tiles, leather, cloth, sheet-rock, plaster, paneling, wood products, paper, carpet, padding, etc.). When removing drywall or sheetrock, cut at least 12 inches beyond the area of visible mold. Hard material such as glass, plastic, or metal can be kept after cleaning and disinfecting.
3. Use a non-ammonia soap or detergent in hot water and scrub the affected area. Use a stiff brush or cleaning pad on block walls or uneven surfaces.
4. Thoroughly rinse the area with hot water. A wet-dry vacuum is an easy way to pick up excess water.
5. Disinfect the area with a dilute solution of **10 percent household bleach (1 cup bleach to 1 gallon of water)** Do not use straight bleach—it will not be more effective.
6. Completely dry the area for two or three days. Raising the temperature and using dehumidifiers will help.
7. Vacuum your home thoroughly, preferably with a HEPA or filtered vacuum.



Should I hire a professional?

- ◆ Cleaning up mold will increase your exposure to mold and bleach fumes.
- ◆ If you have respiratory problems like asthma or emphysema, or the affected area is large, consult with a professional.
- ◆ Having someone test mold is not usually a necessary first step and can be expensive.
- ◆ If you can see or smell mold, you probably have a mold problem.
- ◆ Mold may be hidden behind walls, wallpaper, panel, or embedded in porous material.
- ◆ If after cleaning mold, you still notice an odor you may have hidden mold.
- ◆ You may wish to hire a professional firm when mold is in difficult to reach places such as in heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.

ENSURING REMEDIATION OR CLEANUP IS FINISHED

- ◆ Water or moisture problem has been fixed completely.
- ◆ Mold removal has been completed both visible mold and moldy odors.
- ◆ Revisiting the site after clean up should show no signs of water damage or mold growth.
- ◆ Home occupants should have no complaints or physical symptoms linked to mold or mold spores.

REMEMBER: *Hand washing is the single most important thing you can do to protect your health when you clean up after a flood.*