

FAST FACTS: *Household Mold*

What is mold?

Molds are fungi that grow in different shapes, sizes and colors. In nature molds break down dead and decaying material. In indoor environments, molds can cause structural damage because they consume and destroy the material they settle upon.



What causes mold to grow?

Molds need moisture to grow. Some household situations that lead to mold growth include:

- 1) Clogged gutters and downspouts,
- 2) Leaky plumbing,
- 3) Leaky roofs, and
- 4) Using hot water without venting the steam to outdoor air.

Also, when indoor air is warmer than outdoor air, moisture can collect on cold surfaces like single-pane windows, uninsulated walls, pipes and roofs.

Should I test for mold or have mold samples from my home tested?

Generally it is not helpful to test for mold in your home. There are no standards to judge "safe" levels of indoor mold. Therefore, testing cannot tell you if the amount of mold detected will harm your health. Typically if you can see mold or smell musty odors, you have a mold problem.

Can the government inspect my home for mold?

County and state public health departments do not have resources for inspecting private homes or testing for mold.

What should I do if I have moldy conditions in my home?

The key to mold control is moisture control. If mold is a problem in your home, clean up the mold and fix the water problem.

- Keep indoor humidity at 30 to 60 percent.
- Use air conditioners and/or dehumidifiers to reduce moisture in the air.
- Use exhaust fans to pull indoor moisture (from cooking, dishwashing, showering and laundering) outside.
- Inspect and repair your ventilation system.
- Increase air circulation by moving furniture several inches away from the walls.
- Remove carpeting in areas where there is ongoing moisture (from cooking, sinks, bathtubs and showers).

