



Mold and Moisture Prevention

How to Prevent Moisture Buildup and Mold

What is the Problem?

Mold has been on Earth for millions of years and grows where moisture is present, whether indoors or outdoors.¹ Exposure to damp and moldy environments can cause a variety of health effects.² Mold spores enter indoor spaces from the outside through open doorways, windows, animals, people, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems.³ The Institute of Medicine (IOM) found there is sufficient evidence to link indoor mold exposure to upper respiratory tract symptoms (e.g., nasal and sinus congestion, chest tightness, etc.), coughing, and wheezing.⁴



Who is at Risk?⁵

- Individuals (adults and children) exposed to indoor mold for long periods of time.
- Individuals who are sensitive (allergy) to molds.
- Individuals with a suppressed immune system.
- Individuals with lung disease.

Prevention Tips⁶

- Moisture control is the key to mold control. Keep indoor humidity low.
- When water leaks or spills occur indoors – **ACT QUICKLY**. If wet or damp materials or areas are dried 24-48 hours after a leak or spill happens, in most cases mold will not grow.
- Clean and repair roof gutters regularly.
- Keep air conditioning drip pans clean and ensure drain lines are unobstructed and flowing properly.
- If you see condensation or moisture collecting on windows, walls or pipes, **ACT QUICKLY** to dry the wet surface(s) and reduce the moisture/water source.
- Increase ventilation or air movement by opening doors, and/or windows or use air conditioners and/or de-humidifiers when humidity is high and/or when condensation and/or moisture is present.



Plan of the Week (POW):

Moisture control is the key to mold control.⁷ When water leaks or spills occur indoors - **ACT QUICKLY.**⁸ If wet or damp materials or areas are dried 24-48 hours after a leak or spill happens, in most cases mold will not grow.⁸ **ALWAYS** wipe up excessive moisture, vent appliances that produce moisture, such as clothes dryers, stoves, and kerosene heaters to the outside where possible, use air conditioners and/or de-humidifiers when needed and use exhaust fans or open windows whenever cooking, running the dishwasher or dishwashing, showering, etc.⁹

References

- 1-2 Facts about Mold and Dampness. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). http://www.cdc.gov/mold/dampness_facts.htm. Updated 18 September 2012. Accessed 14 May 2013.
- 3-5 Facts about Stachybotrys chartarum and Other Molds. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <http://www.cdc.gov/mold/stachy.htm>. Updated 18 September 2012. Accessed 13 May 2013.
- 6-9 A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home. United States Environmental Protection Agency. <http://www.epa.gov/iedmold1/preventionandcontrol.html>. Updated 5 March 2012. Accessed 14 May 2013.

NMCPHC Injury Prevention and Violence Free Living Webpage

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/injury-violence-free-living/Pages/injury-violence-free-living.aspx>

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