

Does Mold Live in Your House?

Mold comes in a rainbow of colors and can take on a variety of appearances.

Mold can be: black, grey-brown, grey-green, greenish-black, white, orange, pink or purple. It can look like dust or be slimy, in appearance. **All** visible mold or biological growth is very serious. Once you see mold or notice a musty smell, it's usually in epidemic proportion throughout the home or office. It can also be an indication of a much larger mold growth problem in less visible places since it travels easily. It starts wherever there is moisture, grows in a humid environment and feeds upon cellular material.

Mold stages:

Microscopic-Measles type specks on a surface

Moss- The surface is textured

Mushrooms- Growing away from the surface

The most common places to locate mold and infectious growth in your home or business:

A/C Vents - Dust like substance or discoloration around discharge registers, where the air is "blowing" out, can be mold.

Adhesive (Flooring/ Cabinets/ Furniture/ Counter Tops/ Wallboard) - Is a food source for mold, especially when there is moisture that seeps into the floor.

Baseboards - Dirt ends up here, providing the mold colonies with plenty of nutrients to thrive behind floor baseboards.

Basements/Crawl Spaces - Look for any evidence of dampness.

Bathroom/Kitchen Cabinets – Are excellent breeding grounds for mold for there is both **moisture in these** dark spaces, and mold food can accumulate.

Blocked Gutters - Can back-up and cause the water to seep into walls, through the roof, down to the foundation, and into the home.

Ceiling - Water infiltration from duct condensation and roof leaks start from above.

Ceramic Tile (Bathroom) - The grout expands and contracts, becoming porous allowing water penetration behind the tile.

Chronic Infections / Itching – Can be caused by sick building syndrome (mold in the space)

Closets - Dark places that hold items exposed to contaminants ie. damp clothes, cardboard boxes shipped from retail stores and areas out of this country.

Clothes Dryers or Appliances Not Vented Outdoors – Steam (moisture), creates a great environment for mold to flourish.

Condensation or Rusting - Around pipes, windows, or walls is a sign of moisture.

Cracked/Peeling Paint – Is a sign of excessive moisture within the wall and possible mold growth.

Dirt / Dust and Grime - These are the food source for toxic black mold and enables it to spread.

Dirty A/C Filters - Collect molds and biological contaminants, allowing them to multiply, and re-circulate them throughout the home.

Drywall - Cracked/peeling paint, bulging behind the paint, or discoloration of the walls is usually a sign of moisture.

Ductwork & A/C Systems - Especially in the condenser or the cooling coil and drain pan.

Evaporative Coolers (a.k.a. Swamp Coolers) - Evaporative coolers increase humidity in the home or building.

Flooding/ Leakage or Water intrusion – Of any kind, in a day, can create mold growth, in a few days.

Food Storage Areas - Exposed to other contaminated foods, pests, rodent dropping.

High Humidity - Outdoor humidity affect indoor humidity levels, creating a perfect environment for toxic mold growth.

High Relative Humidity - 16% RH in rooms sustains mold, 55% RH, for growth.

Insulation - Insulation in the ductwork, attics, basements, and crawl spaces are most susceptible to mold growth.

Leaky Roof - Water stains, spots or discoloration or sagging ceiling areas.

Loosening Drywall Tape – Is a sure sign that moisture has infiltrated the wall.

Mildew & Musty Odors – Is a sign of indoor fungal contamination.

New Construction - Building materials installed when wet or damp can create long-range problems as they dry out, after the house is closed-in.

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Particle Board – Is another desirable source of nutrition for mold.

Plant Pots - Watered regularly, and the soil also contain valuable nutrients for mold.

Poor Ventilation – When the outside air pressure, is greater than the air pressure inside, forces moisture and contaminates back into the home.

Quick temperature changes – When leaving the house for long periods of time (summer), set the thermostat at 82⁰ and leave a fan running to circulate the air.

Refrigerators - Drain pan beneath the refrigerator should be regularly checked for moisture and microbiological growth.

Running toilets and dripping faucets - Creates a continuous stream of moisture.

Sewer Backup and Floor Drains - Exposes the occupants to a host of infectious bacteria.

Shower Curtains - Dirt and grime that we wash off ourselves, and the soapy water will allow bacteria to grow.

Signs of Toxic Poisoning - Headaches, decreased attention span, difficulty concentrating, and dizziness.

Stucco - If not installed properly can cause mold growth in exterior wall cavities.

Sweating Pipes - Track where the moisture is accumulating. This can lead you to mold growth.

Vehicles - Can be exposed to some of the same issues as buildings, as the A/C unit brings in pollens.

Wall Cavities - Warm air meets cooler air around the perimeter of your home and traps moisture.

Wall Discoloration - More common colors are mold are: yellow, green, brown, or black.

Wallpaper – The glue serves as a favorable nutrient of mold behind wallpaper.

Warped Wood – Is a signs of moisture, which mold loves feeding on wood and other cellular material.

Water/Pipe Leaks - Often undetected leaks in between walls cause mold to intrude into home over time

Water-Damaged Areas - Flooding, leaks, or spills are prime candidates for toxic black mold growth.

Wet Materials - In 8 hours, damp towels, rags, carpet, furniture, steam from cooking can start mold growth.

Window Frames - Condensation can lead to mold growth where the window frame meets the wall.

Wood - Furniture, house framing and all wood products when they become and remain wet allow mold, to grow.

Allergy/Asthma and Respiratory Symptoms – Often comes from poor indoor air quality.

Mold Test - There are a variety of sampling techniques that can be used to help determine whether or not you have excessive levels of mold. There are air sampling, Petri dishes, tape test and mold sniffing dogs to name a few. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages and vary in price. **Until recently mold infestation was very expensive to clean up.** To make matters worse, many home insurance companies are denying mold claims. Mold infestation can cause the value of your home or building to drop tremendously. If it has not been cleaned properly a home can become inhabitable. Exposure leaves residents vulnerable to fatigue, immune deficiencies, high blood pressure, heart disorders, infections and neurological problems.

"The **only factor that can be controlled is moisture."**

National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)

**"The way to control indoor mold growth
is to control moisture."**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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