

## Mold and mold remediation

### Mold

Mold, mildew, and other toxic organisms commonly occur in areas that show evidence of, or have the potential for, moisture intrusion and/or inadequate ventilation. Any area or item that exhibits such conditions can be a health hazard to children, pregnant women, the elderly, and others whose immune systems are compromised, such as those having had surgery (due to painkilling drugs).

Most of us know what mold looks like and smells like. Thousands of different types of mold occur naturally throughout the world, but apparently only a few of them cause health problems. Mold spores move naturally through the air and can be found in every area of the home, and there's nothing you can do about it. You are breathing it as you are reading this. It grows on most building materials as long as the requisite moisture is present. Because mold requires a high moisture content in order to grow and thrive, so the key to controlling mold is controlling moisture: reduce moisture (keep the interior of your house dry and the humidity level below 45%), remove visible signs of mold, and disinfect surfaces. If a water invasion occurs, eliminate the water source and quickly dry, repair, and/or replace wet areas and items.

Since many homeowners do not regularly inspect their homes for water and drainage leaks, mold problems do occur in our homes and buildings. You can prevent mold from growing and thriving in your home, and affecting your health, by inspecting your home on a regular basis (monthly at a minimum) for water and drainage.

If you see mold or smell musty odors, chances are great that you have mold growing in your home. Your first action, then, should be to seek out and correct the problems that are providing the mold with the moisture that it needs to grow and thrive. Remove all the items stored under your sinks and inspect the water and drainage pipes, valves, and connections for leaks. Have any leaks repaired immediately by a qualified plumber. Inspect around sink basins, bathtubs, and shower stalls for deteriorated grouting or caulking. These are areas where water can penetrate into the structure's walls and framing, allowing mold to thrive in those spaces. After using your shower or bathtub, use your exhaust fans or open the windows in the bathrooms to help prevent a build-up of moisture in those areas.

I am not a mold testing laboratory; therefore, the identification of specific types of mold is beyond the scope of the home inspection, and I cannot state definitively whether any specific type of mold is or is not present. When I do smell musty odors or see mold-like substances growing, I note it in my reports for you. If you want to know what specific type of mold is present, please [contact us](#) or a qualified testing laboratory. Only qualified personnel, like us, can determine what types of mold are growing and thriving in your home. Before doing that, though, track down the source of the moisture and fix that problem. Mold cannot grow without moisture.



## **Mold remediation—deciding when to call a professional**

Can you clean up mold yourself? Yes, but you should realize that there will be a significant difference in the approach used for small amounts of mold in a sink cabinet and a large, contaminated area, such as mold growing in the walls. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a homeowner wearing personal protective equipment may handle small cleanup areas. When I was young, our version of spring cleaning was getting out the Clorox and the stainless steel wool, opening all the windows, and cleaning all the bathtubs and showers; those were small cleanup areas. For larger areas, the EPA advises hiring an experienced, professional contractor. Any home that has sustained major water damage or flooding needs to be inspected by a qualified water loss specialist.

If you decide to take on the task yourself, remember that you will be exposed to potentially toxic mold and strong detergents and disinfectants. Follow these steps and you should be able to accomplish the task on small areas without any detrimental health effects:

1. Disinfecting agents can be toxic to humans. They should be used only when necessary and should be handled with caution. Disinfectants should only be applied to thoroughly cleaned materials. Do not use disinfectants instead of, or before, cleaning with soap or detergent.
2. Take steps to protect human health during any cleanup. Remove and discard moldy items as soon as possible to prevent further release of spores.
3. Ask family members or bystanders to evacuate areas that are being cleaned and minimize exposure to disinfectants.
4. Clean and thoroughly ventilate the work area.
5. Wear protective clothing that is easily cleaned or discarded, and use rubber gloves. Wear a respirator with a P-100 filter to prevent inhalation of airborne spores.
6. Use non-ammonia soap or detergent, or a commercial cleaner, in hot water, and scrub the entire area that is affected by the mold. Use a stiff brush or cleaning pad on cement-block walls or rough surfaces. Make sure the entire surface is wet, and allow the disinfectant to remain on the surface for the prescribed time before rinsing.
7. Rinse and dry cleaned items, dispose of any sponges or rags used to clean the mold, and properly dispose of extra disinfectant and runoff.
8. The cleaned areas and house should be thoroughly dried and ventilated for several days.
9. If mold returns after a cleanup, it may indicate an undetected problem, such as a leak. If mold contamination is extensive or if you are unsure of yourself during the cleaning process, consult a **professional mold remediation company**.

Here's a local link:

<http://www.mec-inc.com/mold.htm>



We are certified to do mold sampling/testing, [call us](#) today to discuss options.