

Here's how to...

# Understand Mold Growth

Mold is dangerous; it can contaminate food and utensils and compromise the health of your customers and crew. Mold can grow on virtually any substance where moisture, oxygen and an organic food source are present. The presence of mold anywhere in your store—including food, equipment, utensils and/or grout—is a compliance issue and must be addressed immediately.

## What is mold?

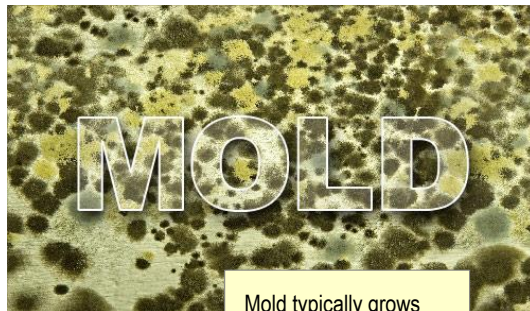
Information provided by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. For more information go to <http://www.epa.gov/mold>.

Mold is a multi-cellular type of fungus that can grow in any environment, all year long. To reproduce, molds create thousands of spores that travel through the air, sticking to a variety of surfaces. Once they attach to their host, they produce roots and begin to reproduce quickly. These spores are able to survive harsh environmental conditions and can be difficult to kill.

Mold can cause respiratory problems in those who are sensitive to molds or their spores. Common symptoms of mold sensitivity include:

- Nasal congestion
- Throat irritation
- Coughing
- Eye irritation
- Skin irritation
- Lung infections (in those allergic to mold or with compromised immune systems)

Some molds produce mycotoxins, a secondary compound that helps the fungus become established in its environment. If ingested, these mycotoxins can be harmful.



Mold typically grows in patches and can be many different colors or smell musty.

## How does mold grow?

Mold grows when mold spores come in contact with the appropriate moisture, nutrients and temperature. When conditions are right, mold can grow within 24 to 48 hours. Many types of mold grow well at temperatures between 60°F and 80°F, temperatures typically found in our stores.

Changes in temperature throughout the day can produce the moisture needed for mold growth. If moisture problems are not corrected and proper cleaning procedures are not in place, any mold cleanup or removal will likely be only a short-term solution; at some point the mold growth will reoccur.

## Where are the most common areas for mold growth in the store?

### DID YOU KNOW?

Mold can grow on everything from paper products to upholstery. Drywall, ceiling tiles, carpet, cardboard, even dust can contain mold or spores.

<b>Gaskets</b> .....	on walk-ins, reach-ins and other refrigeration equipment; often overlooked during equipment cleaning because they can be difficult to reach (as is the case with top gaskets on walk-in refrigerator/freezer)
<b>Caulking</b> .....	around mop sink and 3-compartment sink, specifically the area where the back wall and 3-compartment sink meet; this area is typically caulked with construction caulking (not mold resistant)
<b>Soda/tea dispensers</b> .....	overflow trays and dispenser heads if not cleaned daily allow for quick mold growth
<b>HVAC drip trays</b> .....	overflow collects here and mold will result if not regularly cleaned
<b>Tile grout</b> .....	on floors or walls, if water is allowed to stand on floors without proper drying mold can grow quickly
<b>Bathrooms</b> .....	around toilets and sinks, especially around pipes and caulking
<b>Food products</b> .....	expired, temperature abused and/or improperly sealed or stored foods can grow mold
<b>Ice machines</b> .....	not cleaned and sanitized regularly according to manufacturer's instructions can lead to conditions that support mold growth.