

MOLD

Mold Though the Health Department does not have a program with enforcement authority to address mold complaints inside residential property, it offers education. Below are common questions related to mold and basic answers.

What are molds?

- Molds are fungi that grow most easily in warm, damp environments. Mold is found naturally in nearly all outdoor environments. Mold spores and related particles are regularly floating invisibly through the outdoor air, and can also be found in indoor air. It is when inside conditions become right for mold to grow that problems can develop. However, mold also can be used to the benefit of people such as in the production of some antibiotics, and in the processing of some foods such as cheese.

How do molds affect the health of people?

- The affect molds have on people varies among individuals. Many people have little or no reaction when exposed to mold. The type and amount of mold a person is exposed to, as well as length of time exposed, can be determining factors. The circumstances of the exposure can also play a role. How sensitive a person is to mold exposure depends on the individual. The most common adverse reactions to molds occur to those with allergy sensitivities. Symptoms may include nasal congestion, itchy or watery eyes, wheezing or skin irritation

What causes molds to grow in residences?

- For mold to grow inside a building, three factors are needed. These include a food source, moisture and initial mold organism such as spores. The food source can be dry wall, wood, ceiling tiles and other items. An ongoing source of moisture could include a leaky roof or window, plumbing leaks, damp foundations, or even excessively high indoor humidity. These conditions, combined with naturally occurring mold spores, can lead to the growth of mold in a residence if left unchecked

What can I do to prevent mold from growing in my residence?

- Regularly check your home for any types of leak and immediately correct any that is found. Consistent humidity levels of 40 to 60 percent in the home can also help prevent mold growth. De-humidifiers and air conditioners can help lower humidity levels.

How do I clean up mold and keep it from coming back?

- Fix the problem that is causing the abundance of moisture in the affected area and allow it to dry. Even if mold is completely cleaned up, if the problem that caused it to form there in the first place is not fixed, it will likely return. Hard surfaces (concrete, metal, plastic, wood, etc.) often can be addressed by cleaning with water and detergent, allowing it to completely dry, then treating with a mold inhibitor product if appropriate.

I live in an apartment or rental house and there is mold growing in it. Is my landlord responsible for removing it?

- It is important that tenants act as a partner with landlords to help address living conditions. Renters should take steps within their control to limit the potential for mold growth.
 - Regularly clean the apartment/home
 - Checking for any type of leak and notify the landlord if found.
 - Advise your landlord or maintenance department of any related observations or concerns.Apartment landlords generally are responsible for taking corrective action on mold issues beyond minor mildew-type growths that can be handled with regular cleaning. The same often goes for rental homes, though it may depend on the specifics of individual rental contracts. Unfortunately, most local jurisdictions do not have ordinances or programs that allow local officials to investigate or take enforcement action inside residential property for mold issues.