

# MOLD INFORMATION

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According to Louisiana laws regulating home inspections (Title 46, Part XL, Chapter 3 §309.A.7.), licensed home inspectors are not required to inspect or report on the presence or absence of any suspected or actual adverse environmental condition or hazardous substance, including but not limited to mold. This is due to the fact that mold cannot be definitively identified without being properly sampled and tested by a qualified laboratory. While these services are available for an additional charge, sampling and testing are not performed as part of a routine home inspection. However, in 2014 the state legislature passed the following law:

A licensed home inspector shall include in his written report of the home inspection the presence of suspected mold growth, if during the course of inspecting the systems and components of the structure in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter and board rules and regulations, the licensed home inspector discovers visually observable evidence of suspected mold growth on the inside of the structure.

As a result of this law, this information is being provided to you during your home inspection process. This information is being provided as a general guideline and is not to be considered complete information on mold and suspected mold growth. Please consult with your physician, appropriate mold professional and provided reference sources for additional information regarding any concerns that you may have regarding this house.

According to the EPA, Mold spores are ubiquitous; they are found both indoors and outdoors. This means that mold is everywhere, and that all houses (including this one) have mold present inside of the structure. Mold spores cannot be eliminated from indoor environments. Some mold spores will be found floating through the air and in settled dust; however, they will not grow if moisture is not present. Mold is not usually a problem indoors—unless mold spores land on a wet or damp spot and begin growing. As molds grow they digest whatever they are growing on. Unchecked mold growth can damage buildings and furnishings; molds can rot wood, damage drywall, and eventually cause structural damage to buildings. Mold can cause cosmetic damage, such as stains, to furnishings. The potential human health effects of mold are also a concern. It is important, therefore, to prevent mold from growing indoors. Standards for judging what is an acceptable, tolerable or normal quantity of mold have not been established by any governmental or health organizations. There are no EPA or other federal standards for airborne mold or mold spores, so sampling cannot be used to check a building's compliance with federal mold standards, as there are none.

Mold can grow very quickly. The spores of some varieties can begin to germinate in as little as 4 to 12 hours, if the environmental conditions are favorable. It can be assumed that when building materials get wet, mold growth is likely to start immediately. In wet porous materials, mold can become extensive within 24 to 48 hours. Due to this fact, the home inspector cannot be held liable for any mold growth that is discovered in the home after the home inspection has been completed. If you see any suspected mold growth in the home during the inspection process, it is your responsibility to alert the home inspector of your suspicions so that the information may be included in your inspection report. A standard home inspection is not a mold inspection, and home inspectors are not inspecting the house with the express goal of discovering suspected mold growth. Any discoveries will be noted in the report, but the inspector is performing a general home inspection, not a mold inspection.

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EPA Mold Homepage - links to EPA mold documents and non-EPA resources <http://www.epa.gov/mold>

A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home

[www.epa.gov/mold/moldguide.html](http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldguide.html)

Biological Contaminants

<https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/biological-pollutants-impact-indoor-air-quality>

Fact Sheet: Flood Cleanup - Avoiding Indoor Air Quality Problems

<https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/flood-cleanup-protect-indoor-air-quality>

EPA Hurricane Information

<http://www.epa.gov/hurricanes/>

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Home Page

[www.epa.gov/iaq](http://www.epa.gov/iaq)

Indoor Air Quality Building Education and Assessment Model (I-BEAM)

<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/largebldgs/i-beam/index.html>

IAQ in Large Buildings/Commercial Buildings

<https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/iaq-building-education-and-assessment-model-ibeam-diagnosing-and-solving>

IAQ Tools for Schools

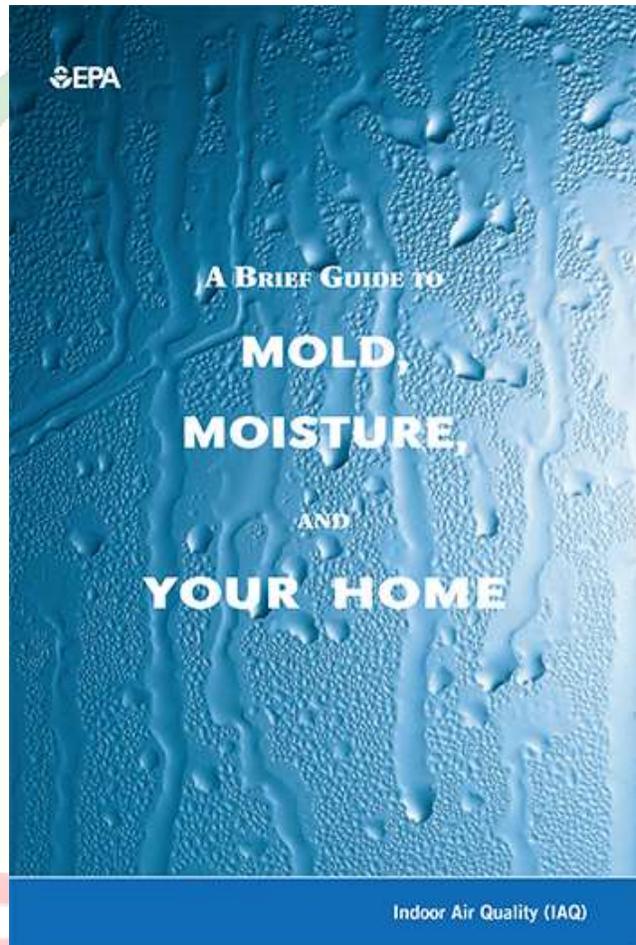
[www.epa.gov/iaq/schools](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools)

Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings

<https://www.epa.gov/mold/mold-remediation-schools-and-commercial-buildings-guide>

Regulating Antimicrobial Pesticides

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/antimicrobial-pesticide-registration>



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## **Mold**

### **What are molds?**

Molds are tiny microscopic organisms that digest organic matter and reproduce by releasing spores. Molds are a type of fungi and there are over 100,000 species. In nature, mold helps decompose or break-down leaves, wood and other plant debris. Molds become a problem when they go where they are not wanted and digest materials such as our homes.

### **What makes molds grow in my home?**

Mold enters your home as tiny spores. The spores need moisture to begin growing, digesting and destroying. Molds can grow on almost any surface, such as wood, ceiling tiles, wallpaper, paints, carpet, sheet rock, and insulation. The mold grows best when there is lots of moisture from a leaky roof, high humidity, or flood. There is no way to get rid of all molds and mold spores from your home. But you can control mold growth by keeping your home dry.

### **Can I be exposed to mold?**

When molds are disturbed, they release spores into the air. You can be exposed by breathing air containing these mold spores. You can also be exposed through touching moldy items, eating moldy food or accidental hand to mouth contact.

### **Do molds affect my health?**

Most molds do not harm healthy people. But people who have allergies or asthma may be more sensitive to molds. Sensitive people may experience skin rash, running nose, eye irritation, cough, nasal congestion, aggravation of asthma or difficulty breathing. People with an immune suppression or underlying lung disease may be at increased risk for infections from molds. A small number of molds produce toxins called mycotoxins. When people are exposed to high levels of mold mycotoxins they may suffer toxic effects, including fatigue, nausea, headaches, and irritation to the lungs and eyes. If you or your family members have health problems that you suspect are caused by exposure to mold, you should consult with your physician.

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## **When is mold a problem?**

You know you have mold when you smell the "musty" odor or see small black or white specks along your damp bathroom or basement walls. Some mold is hidden, growing behind wall coverings or ceiling tiles. Even dry, dead mold can cause health problems, so always take precautions when you suspect mold. Mold is often found in areas where water has damaged building materials and furniture from flooding or plumbing leaks. Mold can also be found growing along walls where warm moist air condenses on cooler wall surfaces, such as inside exterior walls, behind dressers, headboards, and in closets where articles are stored against walls. Mold often grows in rooms with both high water usage and humidity, such as kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms, and basements. If you notice mold or know of water damaged areas in your home, it is time to take action to control its growth.

## **When should I sample for mold?**

In most cases, you don't need to sample for mold because you can often see or smell mold. Even a clean, dry house will have some mold spores, but typically not enough to cause health problems. If you smell mold, it may be hidden behind wallpaper, in the walls or ceiling, or under the carpet. If you suspect you have hidden mold be very careful when you investigate; protect yourself from exposure in the same manner as you would for a clean-up.

## **Can I control mold growth in my home?**

Yes, you can. Dry out the house and fix any moisture problems in your home:

- Stop water leaks, repair leaky roofs and plumbing. Keep water away from concrete slabs and basement walls.
- Weather permitting, open windows and doors to increase air flow in your home, especially along the inside of exterior walls. Use a fan if there are no windows available.
- Make sure that conditioned air flows into all areas of the home. Move large objects a few inches away from the inside of exterior walls to increase air circulation.
- Install and use exterior vented exhaust fans in bathrooms, kitchens, and laundry rooms.
- Ventilate and insulate attic and crawl spaces. Use heavy plastic to cover earth floors in crawl spaces.
- Clean and dry water damaged carpets, clothing, bedding, and upholstered furniture within 24 to 48 hours, or consider removing and replacing damaged furnishings.
- Vacuum and clean your home regularly to remove mold spores.
- Check around your windows for signs of condensation and water droplets. Wipe them up right away so mold can't start to grow.

Additional information at <http://epa.gov/mold/>