



## INFORMATION SHEET: MOLD GROWTH

## ENERGY + HEALTH PROGRAM

The following information is from the EPA website. Visit [www.epa.gov/mold](http://www.epa.gov/mold) for additional information.

### **Mold Growth**

Mold may begin growing indoors when mold spores land on surfaces that are wet. There are many types of mold, and none of them will grow without water or moisture.

If there is mold growth in your home, you must clean up the mold and fix the water problem. If you clean up the mold, but don't fix the water problem, the mold problem, most likely, will come back.

There may be hidden mold if a building smells moldy, but the source is not visible, or if there has been water damage and residents are reporting health problems.

### **Effects of Mold on Health**

Molds have the potential to cause health problems. Molds produce allergens, irritants, and in some cases, potentially toxic substances. Allergic responses are common and include hay fever-type symptoms, such as sneezing, runny nose, red eyes and skin rash. In addition, mold exposure can irritate the eyes, skin, nose, throat and lungs of both mold-allergic and non-allergic people.

### **Cleaning Mold Growth**

If there has been a lot of water damage, and/or mold growth covers more than 10 square feet, consult EPA's "Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings." Although focused on schools and commercial buildings, this document is applicable to other building types.

1. Use personal protection equipment prior to starting mold clean up. N-95 face masks, goggles and gloves are all recommended.
2. Scrub mold off hard surfaces with detergent and water, and dry completely. It is not recommended to use biocides (bleaches).

3. Absorbent or porous materials, such as ceiling tiles and carpet, should be thrown away if they are moldy.
4. If mold is not visible, but there are odors or resident complaints, check for hidden mold. If possible check and clean these locations:
  - Back side of drywall, wallpaper and/or paneling
  - Top side of ceiling tiles
  - Underside of carpets and pads
  - Areas inside walls around pipes
  - Surface of walls behind furniture
  - Inside duct work
  - In roof materials
5. Do not paint or caulk moldy surfaces. Clean up the mold and dry the surfaces before painting.
6. If you are unsure about how to clean an item, or if the item is expensive or of sentimental value, you may wish to consult a specialist.

### **Locate Moisture Issues**

The best way to prevent mold is to remove unwanted moisture sources in the home. Locate and remove all common sources of unwanted moisture in the home by repairing or replacing. Some common unwanted sources of moisture include:

- Roof Leaks
- Plumbing Pipe Leaks
- Foundation Wall Leaks
- HVAC Condensate Line Leaks
- Condensation on Duct Work
- Foundation Ventilation