

## Introduction to Mold

Mold is a fungus that grows in moist environments. Mold reproduces by microscopic airborne spores. When spores land on damp or wet surfaces, mold may start to grow. Mold spores are found in the air and on most surfaces, both indoors and outdoors.

### Mold in Your Home

Mold will not grow without moisture. To prevent mold growth in your home, you must control moisture. Mold will grow in areas that remain damp for extended periods, such as around leaks in roofs, windows, pipes, or where there has been flooding.

### Can Mold Make My Family Sick?

Exposure to mold can cause health effects in individuals sensitive to mold. The most common symptoms for those individuals are congestion, wheezing, and irritation of the eyes, throat, or skin. Severe reactions may occur among individuals with serious allergies to mold or individuals with occupational exposure to large amounts of mold. Severe reactions may include fever or shortness of breath. Individuals that are immune-compromised or with chronic lung disease may develop infections in their lungs. Speak with your physician if you develop any symptoms.

### How Do I Know if I Have a Mold Problem?

Molds produce a musty odor that may be the first indication of a problem. To find mold, examine areas for visible signs of mold growth and water staining. Other clues include excess moisture and water damage. It may be necessary to look behind and underneath surfaces, such as carpets, wallpaper, cabinets, and walls.

### How Do I Clean Up Mold?

- It is important to dry water damaged areas and items within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.
- Control moisture by keeping the humidity in your home below 60 percent, ideally between 30 and 50 percent.
- Materials with excessive mold growth should be discarded such as drywall, carpeting, and ceiling tiles.
- Mold growth on hard surfaces can be cleaned with a rag moistened with dilute detergent. For a large mold problem, an experienced professional should do the work.
- In areas where it is impractical to eliminate a moisture source, a 10 percent bleach solution can be used to keep the mold growth under control.

## What Does Mold Look Like?



There is no practical way to eliminate all mold and mold spores in an indoor environment. The way to control indoor mold growth is to control moisture.

## Additional Information:

The State of Oklahoma does not have laws concerning mold. For additional information about mold, please refer to:

EPA's mold website:  
[www.epa.gov/mold](http://www.epa.gov/mold)

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention mold website:  
[www.cdc.gov/mold](http://www.cdc.gov/mold)