



24/7 RAPID RESPONSE

365 DAYS A YEAR

## Mold In-depth.

*AFTERDISASTER* has over 13 years experience of successful mold remediation.

Where extensive mold has been identified or sensitive individuals are present, caution is required in remediation.

Common molds found indoors are Aspergillus, Alternaria, Caldosporium, Penicillium and Stachybotrus.

Mold spores can survive harsh environmental conditions, such as dry conditions, that do not support normal mold growth.

Mold spores are invisible to the human eye and can become airborne when disturbed by air movement, handling of a mold contaminated item or cleaning and demolition activities. When large numbers of spores are inhaled they interact with body tissues.

Molds produce allergens and irritants causing hay-fever-type symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose and red eyes. Molds can also cause:

- Skin rash
- Irritated eyes
- Nose throat and lungs
- Cognitive disorder
- Blurred vision
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Dry cough
- Nasal congestion
- Aggravate asthma
- Chest tightness or pain

- **Inspection** – Thorough visual inspection of all possible contaminated areas, attic, crawlspace, basement, HVAC and Duct System, floors, walls, ceilings.
- **Pre-testing and analysis** performed by an independent indoor air quality hygienist prior to the start of remediation.
- **Containment and Protection of structure and contents not yet affected-**
  - Limited:** Use polyethylene sheeting ceiling to floor around affected area with a slit entry and covering flap; maintain area under negative air pressure with HEPA filtered fan unit. Block supply and return air vents within containment area.
  - Full:** Use two layers of fire-retardant polyethylene sheeting with one airlock chamber. Maintain area under negative pressure with HEPA filtered fan exhausted outside of building. Block supply and return air vents within containment area.
- **Removal and safe disposal of unsalvageable materials** (usually porous materials such as drywall, insulation and ceiling tiles).
- **High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) Vacuuming of all surfaces**
- **Wet cleaning of affected areas using detergents recommended for mold remediation.**
- **Application of an antimicrobial approved by EPA for mold remediation.**
- **Drying of the structure to safe moisture levels (determined by hygrometer measurement)**
- **Final HEPA Vacuuming of all surfaces**
- **Clearance inspection and testing by the hygienist**
- **Removal of containment**

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More serious conditions, pulmonary hemorrhage and immune system suppression, have been linked to the presence of mycotoxins (the byproduct of mold). Dead mold may still cause allergic reactions. It is not enough to kill the mold, it must also be removed.

### Hidden Mold

If a building smells moldy but you can't see the source, there may be hidden mold. Mold may be hidden behind wallpaper or paneling, on the backside of dry wall, on top of ceiling tiles, in between floors, under carpet and padding. Other possible sources of hidden mold can be around pipes, walls behind furniture or appliances, inside HVAC and Duct Systems. Use caution when investigating hidden mold. Disturbing mold can release massive amounts of spores, which can create health problems.

### Ten Things You Should Know About Mold

1. Potential health effects and symptoms associated with mold exposures include allergic reactions, asthma, and other respiratory complaints.
2. There is no practical way to eliminate all molds and mold spores in the indoor environment; the way to control indoor mold growth is to control moisture.
3. If mold is a problem in your home or school, you must clean up the mold and eliminate sources of moisture.
4. Fix the source of the water problem or leak to prevent mold growth.
5. Reduce indoor humidity (to 30-60% ) to decrease mold growth by: venting bathrooms, dryers, and other moisture-generating sources to the outside; using air conditioners and de-humidifiers; increasing ventilation; and using exhaust fans whenever cooking, dishwashing, and cleaning.
6. Clean and dry any damp or wet building materials and furnishings within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.
7. Clean mold off hard surfaces with water and detergent, and dry completely. Absorbent materials such as ceiling tiles, that are moldy, may need to be replaced.
8. Prevent condensation: Reduce the potential for condensation on cold surfaces (i.e., windows, piping, exterior walls, roof, or floors) by adding insulation.
9. In areas where there is a perpetual moisture problem, do not install carpeting (i.e., by drinking fountains, by classroom sinks, or on concrete floors with leaks or frequent condensation).
10. Molds can be found almost anywhere; they can grow on virtually any substance, providing moisture is present. There are molds that can grow on wood, paper, carpet, and foods.

Sources: A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture and your home: [www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/moldbasics.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/moldbasics.html)

Center for Disease Control: [www.cdc.gov/nceh/airpollution/mold/strats\\_fungal\\_growth.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/airpollution/mold/strats_fungal_growth.htm)

The Basic Facts about Mold: [www.cdc.gov/nceh/airpollution/mold/moldfacts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/airpollution/mold/moldfacts.htm)

Reference: <sup>1</sup>The Impact of Universal Mold Exclusions on Lenders and Practical Risk Management Solutions, *David J Dybdahl, PCPU, ARM is a senior consultant with American Risk Management Resources Network, LLC*