

in a plastic bag before carrying it through the rest of the building.

- Persons carrying out the cleaning should wear a N-95 mask, as well as gloves.

If the contaminated area is **more than 30 square feet** or is in an HVAC system:

- Personnel experienced in mold clean-up and disinfection or in handling of hazardous materials (such as asbestos) are necessary.

*Porous materials such as carpet, drywall or upholstery should be discarded if contaminated because they may harbor spores. Only nonporous materials such as glass, plastic, or metal can be kept after they are cleaned and disinfected.*

## Who do I contact for more information?

For questions regarding mold and indoor air quality, contact:

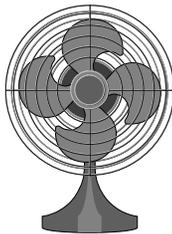
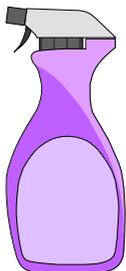
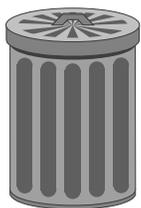
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# Is Mold Affecting Your Health?

## Mold and Indoor Air Quality



Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Public Health  
Indoor Air Quality Program



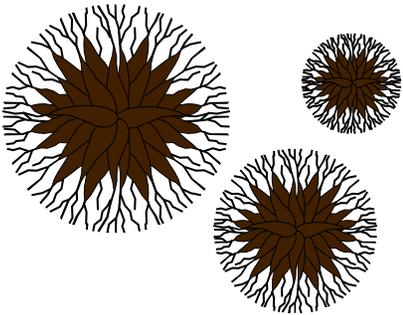
Many people consider mold an inconvenience in a wet basement or poorly ventilated bathroom. But molds can be much more than just an inconvenience—they can affect your health and the structural integrity of your house. Here are some frequently asked questions and their answers.

## What is mold?

Molds are microscopic fungi, which are neither plants nor animals. In nature, molds use enzymes to eat dead plants and animals. If there is a moist environment and other proper conditions, molds can attack materials in a house or building such as fiberboard, drywall, carpet backing, paper, dust, wood, or exposed soils in crawlspaces. Once established in a building, molds/fungi can spread, destroying structural wood components, and can be hard to get rid of.

## Why is mold hazardous?

Molds use tiny spores to reproduce. Spores that become airborne can be hard to filter out and may stay suspended in the air for long periods of time.



The spores can then be easily inhaled, causing the following symptoms:

- coughing, wheezing
- runny nose/sinus problems
- ongoing flu-like symptoms
- skin rashes
- hypersensitivity pneumonitis, asthma, chemical sensitivities or other immune responses after long-term exposure

A few mold species are capable of producing toxins if conditions are right. People vary in their sensitivity to the concentration of spores in the air. The elderly, children, and people with compromised immune systems are most vulnerable to the effects of spores, but even healthy people may react to high concentrations.

## No one should live with mold!

### How do I prevent mold?

As part of routine maintenance, buildings should be checked for evidence of water damage and visible mold. Conditions that can cause mold (water leaks, flooding, high humidity, and condensation) should be corrected.

### Is there mold in my house?

For mold to grow, it needs moisture and a food source. Since there is usually plenty of organic material in a home to serve as food for the mold, the presence of water determines where mold will grow. If you can see visible mold growth or smell musty odors, then you may have mold growing in your home.

## Should I test for mold?

Testing is expensive and sometimes unreliable because molds are naturally present in the outdoor environment. If you can see it or smell it, you've probably got mold in your house. Unless it is for legal or insurance purposes, testing/sampling for mold isn't recommended.

## How do I clean-up?

For any mold problem, the moisture source needs to be eliminated first. Air circulation and increased light may also reduce mold growth. If the contaminated area is **approximately less than 10 square feet**:

- Wear personal protective gear such as gloves and a face mask, and only individuals who are free from allergy, asthma, and immune disorders should clean the area.
- Contaminated porous materials should be placed in a sealed plastic bag before disposing outside the building to prevent further contamination.
- Wash all remaining non-absorbent surfaces and surrounding areas with detergent. If bleach is desired, make sure to use a dilute 10% solution (1.5 cups of bleach for 1 gallon water) and ventilate the area. Let the area sit for 15 minutes, then rinse with water and allow thorough drying.

If an area of mold is approximately between 10 and 30 square feet:

- Using the same procedure as the 10 sq. ft. case, take the additional precaution of covering the contaminated material with plastic sheets and tape before removing or handling the material. Then seal the material