



# MOLDS

## AT HOME AND AT THE WORKPLACE



**Molds** are forms of fungi that are found naturally both indoors and outdoors. They come in a variety of colors, including green, black, white, brown and orange. Molds sometimes appear fuzzy, but often appear in slimy streaks. Molds often have an earthy or mildew odor.

### What causes mold to grow inside?

Molds thrive in moist environments and need to have a food source. Molds tend to grow well on cloth, wood, and wallboard but can grow on virtually any surface. When there is moisture that is not dried promptly, molds can reproduce quickly.

### How do I get exposed to mold?

Molds produce microscopic spores that can travel through the air and into your lungs. You can also be exposed to mold by skin contact.

### How can molds affect my health?

The most common health problems from molds are allergy-like symptoms, especially in people who already have allergy problems.

**Most Common Symptoms (allergy-like):** runny nose, scratchy throat, itchy eyes, or sneezing.

**Less Common Symptoms:** wheezing (should be evaluated by a healthcare provider), coughing, flu-like symptoms, or dizziness.

The color of the mold is NOT an indicator of its potential to cause negative health effects.



### What can I do about molds in my house?

1. Correct obvious water leaks or sources of moisture and dry the area within 24 -48 hours.
2. Remove visible mold on hard surfaces (tile/vinyl) by cleaning with a soap solution.
3. Replace porous materials (ceiling tile/wallboard) contaminated with mold. This may require professional removal. Contact your facility manager if you live in government housing.

In humid environments, keeping surfaces dry enough to prevent mold growth can be challenging.



### What can I do about molds in my workplace?

Report mold growth to your supervisor. Mold in the work area should be removed and causes of the growth, such as water leaks, must be corrected.

### What if I have symptoms I think are related to mold exposure?

You should make note of the timing of the symptoms and see a healthcare provider for evaluation. If you think you may be exposed at your workplace, speak with your supervisor and make an appointment with occupational health.

