

How to Prevent and Get Rid of Mold in the Home



NYC

Department of
Health & Mental
Hygiene

Department of
Housing Preservation
& Development

Mold is a type of fungus that can be found both indoors and outdoors. Hundreds of different kinds of mold are commonly found in the United States, including in New York City. Mold can grow in wet or damp areas in the home. Exposure to mold can cause allergic reactions or may trigger asthma attacks. Fortunately, mold can be controlled by fixing the underlying water problem, such as repairing leaks and reducing dampness, and cleaning up the visible mold.



How can I identify mold?

- Mold can be many different colors, such as gray, black, green, yellow or orange.
- Mold may look furry, slimy or powdery.
- Some mold has a musty, stale or earthy smell.
- Mold usually grows in damp places, such as bathrooms and basements.

Where does mold grow?

- Mold can be found almost anywhere there is water, high humidity or damp conditions. Mold grows faster in warm temperatures and high humidity.
- Mold can grow on paper, fabric, wallpaper glue, Sheetrock, wood, soap scum, leather and many other surfaces.

How can I be exposed to mold?

- You can breathe in mold particles if mold is disturbed or damaged.
- You can also breathe in tiny spores (similar to seeds) that mold may release into the air.



What are the health effects of mold?

- Some people are allergic or sensitive to mold and may experience symptoms such as congestion, cough and runny nose.
- Mold exposure can make asthma symptoms worse or trigger attacks in people with asthma.
- Some people are at risk for more severe reactions to mold, including people who are exposed to large amounts of mold at work (e.g., building demolition workers) or people who have had, or are currently undergoing, certain medical procedures (e.g., bone marrow or organ transplants, chemotherapy).



If you think that you or a family member has symptoms caused by mold exposure, see a health care provider.

How can I prevent mold from growing?

- Fix leaks. If you are a tenant, report the problem to your landlord.
- Dry out damp areas.
- Use a dehumidifier to remove moisture from the air.
- If your bathroom does not have an exhaust fan, open a window after showering.
- Open a window in your kitchen while cooking.

How can I get rid of mold in my home?

For smaller areas of mold (less than 10 square feet):

- Seal off moldy areas using a plastic sheet and duct tape until cleaned. Keep children and pets away.
- Use water and soap or detergent to clean the mold on walls or other hard surfaces.
- Wear waterproof gloves while cleaning.
- Dry the cleaned area completely.
- Throw away any sponges or rags used to clean mold.
- Throw away moldy ceiling tiles, carpet and other absorbent materials.

For large areas of mold (more than 10 square feet) or mold that keeps coming back after you have cleaned it:

- Report the problem to your landlord. Your building owner is required by law to remove visible mold and to fix the problems causing it, such as water leaks.
- If the problem isn't fixed, call **311**.



More Information

For more information about mold:

- Call **311** or visit nyc.gov/health and search for **mold**.
- Visit epa.gov/mold.

For more information about building owner responsibilities and safely fixing indoor allergen hazards:

- Visit nyc.gov/hpd and search for **mold and pests**.

For a list of New York State Department of Labor–licensed mold contractors:

- Visit labor.ny.gov/mold and click on **licensing**.

