

# Preventing Indoor Mold

**What is Mold?** Molds, mushrooms, mildews, and yeasts are 'decomposers' that digest materials in which they live. There are about 100,000 kinds of mold, fewer than 500 are harmful to humans. Molds are allergens and some produce toxins or release volatile organic compounds in materials.

Active mold growth is usually green, black, orange, or purple and inactive mold is dry, powdery and may be white.

Molds spread by making spores, which are small, lightweight and travel through the air, on pets, and people. The spores are very resilient, and can dormant for a long time before activating when exposed to moisture. This makes mold difficult to get rid of.

**Why is climate change impact mold?** Strong storms and flood events that may result in leaks and water damage in homes and businesses. There may also be increased humidity and warmer temperatures which create ideal conditions for mold growth.

**What residents need to know.**



## Health Impacts

Asthma trigger  
Sinus and chest congestion  
Headaches  
Eyes and Throat Irritation  
Skin Irritations  
Liver Problems  
Wound Infections

## Who is at high risk?

People with asthma, allergies, respiratory illness. Infants and children and people with immune disorders or undergoing chemotherapy.

## Preventing Mold

- Maintain roofs and windows in good repair and make sure gutters work properly.
- If a flood or leak occurs, open doors and windows, use fans or dehumidifiers. If necessary, open holes in the wall baseboard to allow drainage and drying.
- Disinfect surfaces with a solution of 1 cup bleach per 1 gallon of water. Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles when working with bleach.
- Never mix bleach and ammonia, the fumes from the mixture can be fatal.
- Wipe surfaces dry with paper towels, not cloth towels.
- Throw out porous, non-cleanable items that have been wet for longer than 48 hours and cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried.
- Objects you can save should be dried or frozen as soon as possible. Freezing inactivates mold.

Key websites:

<http://www.cdc.gov/mold/faqs.htm>

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/Environmental-Health/mold/index.html>

Or [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5508a1.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5508a1.htm)

## Addressing Mold

- Areas less than 10 square feet can sometimes be remediated by the resident, but larger areas require a professional.
- Heating and air conditioning systems need to be inspected and disinfected by a professional.
- Avoid disturbing mold by washing or dusting, it spreads. Water will activate inactive mold.
- Eliminate mold by scrub it with brush and a solution of ½ cup bleach to 1 quart of water. Or, cut moldy section out of the wall board.
- Seal moldy items in plastic bags and remove them immediately from the house.
- Flood insurance covers these items unless no effort was made to clean or prevent damage.