

# AIR, LAND & WATER

## Introduction to Mold

Molds are microscopic organisms that live on plant or animal matter. Mold can be found in the air and on many surfaces, both indoor and outdoor.

### Mold in Your Home

Mold can enter your home through open doorways, windows, vents and heating and air conditioning systems. Mold will grow in places with a lot of moisture, such as around leaks in roofs, windows, pipes or where there has been flooding. When mold spores land on a damp spot indoors, they may begin growing.

### Can Mold Make My Family Sick?

Exposure to mold can cause health effects in some people. Exposure to mold can cause health effects in individuals sensitive to mold. The most common symptoms for those individuals are: congestion, wheezing, and irritation of the eyes, throat, or skin. Severe reactions may occur among individuals with serious allergies to mold or individuals with occupational exposure to large amounts of mold. Severe reactions may include fever or shortness of breath. Individuals that are immune-compromised or with chronic lung disease may develop infections in their lungs. Speak with your physician if you develop any symptoms.

### How Do I Know if I Have a Mold Problem?

Molds produce a musty odor that may be the first indication of a problem. To find mold, examine areas for visible signs of mold growth and water staining. Other clues include excess moisture and water damage. It may be necessary to look behind and underneath surfaces, such as carpets, wallpaper, cabinets, and walls.

#### What does mold look like?



There is no practical way to eliminate all mold and mold spores in an indoor environment. **The way to control indoor mold growth is to control moisture.**

### How do I clean up mold?

- It is important to dry water damaged areas and items within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.
- Control the moisture problem by keeping the humidity in your home between 40-60 percent.
- Materials with excessive mold growth should be discarded such as drywall, carpeting and ceiling tiles.
- Mold growth on hard surfaces can be cleaned with a rag moistened with dilute detergent. For a large mold problem, an experienced professional should do the work.
- In areas where it is impractical to eliminate a moisture source, a 10 percent bleach solution can be used to keep the mold growth under control.
- Continue to monitor the area for new mold growth.

### Additional Information:

The State of Oklahoma does not have laws concerning mold. There are websites with additional information on mold. [www.epa.gov/mold](http://www.epa.gov/mold)  
[www.cdc.gov/mold](http://www.cdc.gov/mold)