

## HEALTH EFFECTS

- Some people are sensitive to molds, and for these people, molds can cause nasal stuffiness, throat irritation, coughing/wheezing, eye irritation, and skin irritation.
- People with mold allergies may have more severe reactions. An estimated 6-10% of the general population and 15-50% of those who are genetically susceptible are sensitized to mold allergens.
- Immune-compromised individuals and individuals with chronic lung illnesses may get serious lung infections when exposed to mold.
- Exposure to mold plays a role in the exacerbation of asthma symptoms in sensitized individuals.
- Studies have suggested a potential link of early mold exposure to development of asthma in some children, particularly among children who may be genetically susceptible to asthma development.
- **In order to prove that mold is causing you or a household member to suffer adverse health conditions, you will need documentation that mold is the cause of from a medical professional.**

## DIAGNOSING MOLD-RELATED ILLNESSES

- First consult a family or general health care provider who will decide whether you need referral to a specialist.
- Specialists might include an allergist who treats patients with mold allergies or an infectious disease physician who treats mold infections. If an infection is in the lungs, a pulmonary physician might be recommended.

## LEGAL OPTIONS IF YOU ARE A RENTER

- Your landlord has a duty under the Ohio Landlord Tenant Act to comply with building, housing, health, and safety codes that “materially affect health and safety.”
- Your landlord also has a duty under the Act to put and keep the premises in a “fit and habitable condition.”
- If you feel your landlord has not met these duties with regard to mold in your home, you have several recourses:
  - If you live in public housing or you have a Housing Choice Voucher, you can contact your housing authority.
  - You may contact your local code enforcement or county health department to report a code violation.
  - Escrow – paying your rent to your local court as an economic incentive to force your landlord to make repairs to leaks, holes, broken windows, etc. – may be an option. Please consult COHHIO’s informational packet on escrow for more information before placing your rent in escrow with the local court.

## SOURCES

<http://www.ohhn.org/moldbasics/>

[http://www.cdc.gov/mold/dampness\\_facts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mold/dampness_facts.htm)

<https://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/eh/healthyhomes/Mold.aspx>

<https://www.epa.gov/mold>

<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/5321.04v1>

# MOLD IN YOUR HOME



E-Mail: [rentinfo@cohhio.org](mailto:rentinfo@cohhio.org)

Call Toll Free:  
888-485-7999

(leave a message – we’ll call you back!)

Website:  
[www.cohhio.org](http://www.cohhio.org)

## IDENTIFYING MOLD

- Visual inspection for dampness, observable mold growth, and detection of musty odors are the most frequently used methods to assess the potential for indoor mold exposure.
- Visual observation of mold growth is limited by the fact that fungal elements such as spores are microscopic, and a mold problem may not be apparent until growth is extensive.



- In most cases, if visible mold growth is present, sampling is unnecessary.
- No EPA or other federal limits have been set for mold or mold spores, so sampling cannot be used to check a building's compliance with federal mold standards.
- Surface sampling may be useful to determine if an area has been adequately cleaned or remediated.
- Sampling for mold should be conducted by professionals who have specific experience in designing mold sampling protocols, sampling methods and interpreting results.

## SOURCES OF MOLD

- In indoor environments, mold originates from two sources:
  - 1) mold infiltrating from outdoors (e.g. through open windows)
  - 2) mold colonization on the interior of the home.
- Most molds require fairly wet conditions (near saturation), lasting for many days, to extensively colonize an environment.
- Common building materials, such as plywood, drywall, furring strips, carpets, and carpet padding are food for molds.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the CDC recommend that it should be assumed that buildings or materials soaked for more than 48 hours are contaminated with mold unless otherwise proven.
- Housing features that can increase moisture levels and growth of mold include poor ventilation, excess production or condensation of water in the house (humidifiers, unvented clothes dryers, etc.) and water leakage or flooding.
- Mold exposure in homes occurs primarily via inhalation of airborne spores and fungal fragments.



## PREVENTING/ELIMINATING MOLD

- The key to mold prevention is moisture control.
- Dry water-damaged areas within 24 to 48 hours to prevent mold growth.
- If the water and/or mold damage was caused by sewage or other contaminated water, then call a professional who has experience cleaning buildings damaged by contaminated water.
- If the moldy area is less than 10 square feet, you likely can handle the cleanup on your own.
- Clean mold off hard surfaces with water and detergent, and dry completely. Absorbent materials such as ceiling tiles that are moldy may need to be replaced.
- If you choose to hire a professional service provider to do the cleanup, make sure they have experience cleaning up mold, and check references.
- If you suspect that the HVAC system in your home may be contaminated with mold (it is part of an identified moisture problem, or there is mold near the intake to the system, etc.), consider hiring a professional service provider with experience in such matters
- Do not run the HVAC system if you know or suspect that it is contaminated with mold - it could spread mold throughout the building.
- If no one in your household suffers from allergies or unexplained symptoms or illnesses and you see no indication that your air ducts are contaminated with mold, having your air ducts cleaned is likely unnecessary.